

CHAMBERS'S

Journal

MAY
1950

THE NIGHT NURSE

By PEARL S. BUCK

IS LIFE ELECTRICAL?

By LANGSTON DAY

THE DAYS OF CRICKET WAGERING

By COLIN BROOKS

SALLOWS MILL

A Riverside Story by JAMES RINNES

HYDE PARK ORACLE

By ROBERT FURNIVAL



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Contents—May 1950

	PAGE
THE NIGHT NURSE	Pearl S. Buck 257
FIGHTING FOR TIME: Britain's Clock Industry	Frank Huntly 263
BETWIXT THE HILLS (Poem)	Gilbert Rae 266
IS LIFE ELECTRICAL?	Langston Day 267
MADAME VARNÁY	Ian Mercer 269
THE DAYS OF CRICKET WAGERING	Colin Brooks 271
TESTAMENT (Poem)	T. L. Howie 273
ALL ABOUT WHITSUNTIDE	Madelaine Paris 274
LIGHT SHIP PASSAGE	J. E. Taylor 277
WHEN SCOLDS WERE GAGGED	Michael Lindsey 280
SONG OF THE BIRDS (Poem)	E. Hayes 282
OVER THE SEA TO SKYE	Neil Matheson 283
THE WESTERN ISLES (Poem)	Elizabeth Fleming 286
SALLOWS MILL	James Rinnes 287
THE FIRST DAYS OF SCOTTISH PRINTING	Winifred Graham Wilson 292
THE MERINO AND ITS WOOL	Laurence Wild 295
ARTURO EL MAGNIFICO	Herbert L. Peacock 297
THE DREAM AND THE BUSINESS (Poem)	E. M. Daniel 298
TRAGEDY IN THE NEST	D. St Leger-Gordon 299
THE SONG OF THE FAIR FOLK (Poem)	Mary E. Loftus 301
OLD TURKISH TIMES	R. O. Harvey 302
HYDE PARK ORACLE	Robert Furnival 305
TOWARDS THE LIGHT (Poem)	Denis Turner 307
SCORING ABOON THE BREATH: Defeating the Evil Eye	Thomas Davidson 308
WAR CEMETERIES IN ITALY	B. S. Townroe 311
AMBITION	J. L. Hepworth 314
OH, TO KNOW! (Poem)	Anso 316
MORE SALADS, PLEASE	W. E. Shewell-Cooper 317
SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE—Beads—With Several Purposes. An Oil Convector-Heater. A Coke-Burning Heat-Storage Cooker. A Power Duster for Farm and Plantation. Housewives and Paint. Anti-Insect Packing Material. A Perspective-Drawing Instrument. Metal Sash-Windows	318

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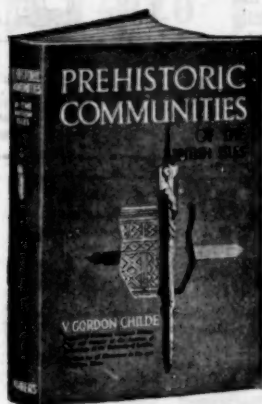
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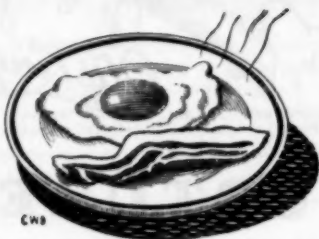
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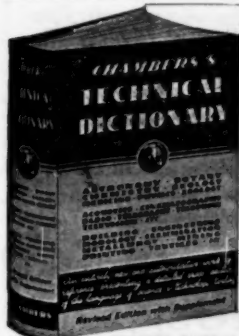
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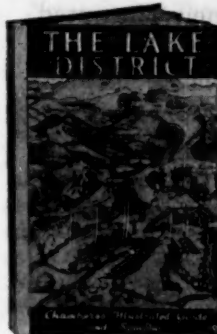
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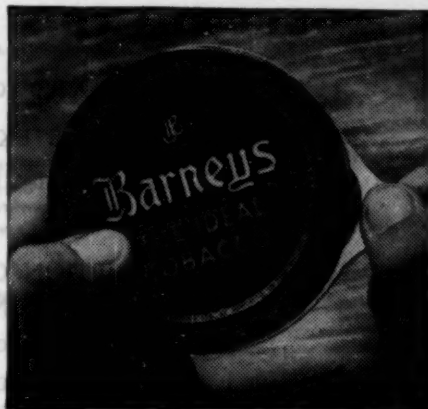
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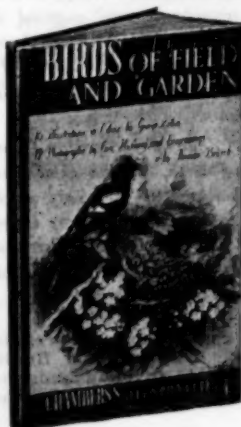
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The Night Nurse

PEARL S. BUCK

'MIND you sleep well to-night, Mr Norton,' the night nurse said.

'Get along with you,' Mr Norton replied. 'You know you'll be late for your young man.'

'But will you be good and go to sleep?'

'I'm always good—that has been my great weakness,' he said. 'And I'll go to sleep when I must—not before. Do you see that moon?'

The moon was indeed a thing to be seen. It shone through the huge window. He had forbidden the night nurse to draw the curtain. She should, of course, not leave him, but he had seen that her eyes were red when she came in, and had extracted from her the reason. She had been compelled to leave her young man at the height of a quarrel to come on duty. He had listened carefully to what she had said.

'It doesn't matter, Mr Norton.'

'Of course it does. Whatever makes a pretty girl cry matters very much.'

'It's not serious.'

'Then why do you cry?'

'Because I didn't mean what I said.'

'And what did you say?'

'Just—if he didn't like me the way I was—' Tears brimmed again, and she bit her lip.

'He'd better find someone else?' Mr Norton hinted.

'How did you know?'

'That's what is usually said.'

The night nurse did not reply to this. She was brisk about the corners of the bed, and her starched white skirts made a pleasant pattern in the large room with the mahogany furniture.

Mr Norton refused to die in the hospital. He had lived in his own house for years, ever

since his young second wife left him when he was sixty-five, and he had his memories. As soon as he knew that nothing could prolong his life beyond a possible six or eight months he arranged himself to be comfortable. The allotted months had passed, and whatever hours he still lived were gifts, and he so received them. He did not mind dying. It was one of the curious things about life that it prepared the creature for the next stage.

'Call up your young man,' he said drowsily to the night nurse. 'Tell him you'll meet him in the rose arbour by the little marble fountain. You remember the small Italian boy who holds a sea-shell? We sat there, I believe, the last evening I was outdoors—let me see—it was in June.'

'Certainly I won't leave you,' the nurse said indignantly. 'It would be neglect of duty. Suppose you—'

'Died while you were gone?'

'I wasn't going to say that—I was going to say suppose you needed me?'

'I shan't need you. I enjoy being alone.'

In the end she was persuaded, as he had known she would be. She had made the telephone-call, and had set the tryst. Upon the statement of his goodness and his determination not to sleep, she now made a gay little face at him and went toward the door. There she stopped. 'I shan't be long, you know.'

'Take as long as needful to make him understand you love him,' Mr Norton said.

He was wonderfully free from pain to-night and he felt strangely well. Obviously his frame was ready for the dust. Just before finality, nature always allowed the creature a few hours of well-being, for remembering.

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

'Oh, that won't take long,' the night nurse sang with gratitude.

She rustled out of the door and closed it softly. He kept his eyes on the moon and could see the nurse speeding down the wide, panelled hall. Perhaps she would turn aside at the green room and go out by the glass doors to the terrace. He wished for a moment that he could get up out of bed and watch her white form flitting between the trees this September night. It was still warm. He half made the effort, and then fell back on his pillow. No, he could only lie and remember. Then let him use these hours well. They might be his last alone. It was impossible to remember, when the nurse was in the room. The young were restless. So had he once been.

GOD, how restless he had been as a young man! This frame of his, now so wasted, had then been brimming with a strength far more than physical, though healthy blood and plenty of brawn had perhaps been basic, after all. The chemistry of the spirit was perhaps only the right combination of food and fresh air, after good inheritance. He had had good ancestors—younger sons who found themselves landless in a society that fed upon the land.

There was no time to think over all that. In these few hours he must think of his own private life, the things that nobody knew altogether except himself. First, his regrets. What had he left undone that he wished now he had done?

His mind ranged back over nearly eighty years, seventy of which he could remember rather well. He was sorry he had not dared to disobey his father more often. His memory, fluttering about the indistinct beginning of his personal life, called up the spacious lawns about his home, deepening into the long grass of the meadows. His father had been a stern man, and because the son had been unwilling to study at school, tutors had been hired to make him learn. Oh, those summer mornings, when the sun shone on the meadows and the brook and he must stop indoors to study Latin and Greek! Mr Norton groaned. 'I was robbed,' he whispered to nobody. 'I was robbed of sunshine and the wet grass under my bare feet. I was robbed of the morning hours.'

Latin and Greek he had forgotten entirely,

but the morning hours that had been forbidden to him he remembered with sad clarity. He wanted them back now, and his soul went searching for them with all the old restlessness. The soul had no part in this death of the body, then. Else how could he remember so clearly that he felt again upon his flesh, not this wasted flesh but the clean firm flesh of his childhood, the warmth of the sun, the long cool hours in the brook, the slipping wet stones, the deep stillness of the woods above the water? There should have been hundreds of such hours, hundreds more than he had had. He burned with anger, and the anger gave him a momentary strength. He raised his head from the pillow, and looked about the room. He had not put on the light as twilight changed to night, and the moon shone through the curtains as it had, he recalled, the night he was seventeen, when he knew he loved Isabel Crane.

HE could still remember the scent of Isabel's hair. She was a little thing, breast high to his six feet, and they were walking along a country road. How had it come to happen that they were walking? He pressed his memory and could not find the answer. Yes, wait—the night before they had danced at the old Mount Rose Clubhouse. It was her debut, of course, if Mount Rose could be said to have debutantes. She was the most delicate-looking thing—virginal. Ah, in those days men liked the virginal! She did not look as though she had ever kissed a man, and this was what had put into him the desire, nay the determination, to be the first. He had called upon her the next morning, with a bouquet of—of rosebuds and maidenhair. What a memory! Yes, pink moss-roses, and she had smelled them and put them tenderly into a little white porcelain vase on a small round mahogany table. Then, it being so fine and fair a day, he had invited her to walk, and from the garden they had gone into the lane. There, behind the hedges, he had implored: 'Isabel, you dear little thing—give me a kiss!'

He held her hand and she let him hold it. Her startled pretty face looked up at him, and for a moment he thought she was going to yield to him. Desire was there, certainly. He savoured the desire, at the end of these years. He remembered her brown dewy eyes and the curls of her brown hair under her

garden-hat—a white dress she wore that morning, soft and filmy. Nothing like white for a young girl, he thought. Then even as he bent to touch her lips she had turned aside her head.

'No,' she had said faintly.

'Why not, darling?'

'Because—'

'Because what?'

'I'm not that kind of a girl.'

'What kind of a girl, Isabel?'

He was in an agony of desire then for her lips, and it was anything to keep her close to him.

'You know,' she said, pushing him away.

'You're a rose, not a girl.'

He had tried thus to coax her. But the old teaching held, the old-fashioned teaching of grim women who had warned her through her childhood and dinned it into her girlhood: 'If you give them what they want they won't want to marry you.'

So she had not given him what she wanted. They had walked staidly back to the house and he had bid her good-bye. Once or twice he had gone to call upon her—three times, actually—and he had not wanted to marry her, not quite forgiving her, perhaps. Yet whether the old women were right, whether, had she yielded, he would have wanted to marry her, he did not know. For at that time he did not want to marry anyone—only to love someone beautiful.

Memory grew chill. Ah, he had been robbed! He should have insisted upon the kiss, taken it by force, and then he would have had it. He would have had it then, and he would have it until now, a treasure.

INSTEAD, he had this emptiness. Yes, though later he had been well married, even happily married, to Cynthia. But Cynthia had not been Isabel, and Isabel was not Isabel but only a lovely girl at a moment when he wanted a kiss. Yet all these years he had not known what he had missed. He had been happy with Cynthia, and she had given him children. She was strong and deep, sturdy body and a mind healthy and humorous. It was a good marriage. She had no pretences. Grey eyes and black hair and smooth white skin, red mouth generous with love, and warm hands—he remembered her in a thousand ways and in no one. He doubted whether he had ever possessed her

entire, but then neither had she possessed him. They had made of marriage a partnership and he had trusted her. She gave him five children, the two girls and the three boys. They were all married now and had children. He was not interested in his grandchildren. Had Cynthia lived, they might have enjoyed together the children of their children, for she had genius with children. As it was, growing old alone, and never more alone than when he had married Christine, the grandchildren seemed none of his. He had lost interest in all children, even in himself, the child that he had been. Eight grandchildren—the frightful fecundity of the human creature! He thought with distaste of his children breeding with other creatures to produce the generation that had nothing to do with him, that was young now when he was old, living when he was about to die.

Yet there had been Cynthia. She had managed somehow just to keep him from having joy in his children. For there was a time, and he could dimly remember it, rejecting entirely these grandchildren, when he felt as parts of himself the tender little beings who surrounded him. He had liked laughter, and they were always laughing with him until Cynthia reminded them that they had not hung up their clothes, nor had they brushed their teeth, nor practised upon pianos, nor performed the constant wearisome round of their days.

'Good God, Cynthia!' he had cried out, 'for what are children born if not for joy?'

'They can enjoy themselves when they have done what they should do,' she had replied with that even calm which he knew contained no true tranquillity.

He had gone underground with his children. Yes, that was a nice way to put it. They had lived a decorous life upon the surface which glittered under Cynthia's eyes. But when she was gone—oh, the long, lovely hours when she was drying at the hairdresser's or was at a fitting, or sometimes when she went to a concert, for she was passionate about music more than about anything—then, he played with his children and lost himself in them. A selfish enjoyment, he now realised, for their joys made his, and their laughter was the source-spring of his own. When Cynthia came back from music she always looked as though she had been crying. He wondered if indeed she did cry when she sat alone among strangers, listening, all of them

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

unknown to each other and yet all known, because the strange Euclidean forms of music bound them together in a silver net of sound. Music—he had never cared for it, because underneath its gayest shape he discerned form and structure, and one could not abandon that form and that structure, for without it music could not exist, and it was the necessity for that inner form that was the secret of Cynthia's being, and he had none of it himself, nothing but the love of joy, wherever he found it.

As the children grew older he lost them. One by one they left him for other worlds, and though when they came back to him they made jokes and manufactured laughter for his sake, he saw that their eyes were grave. There remained to him his dead child, his ten-year-old son, Robert, who was drowned one summer and whose body they never found. Into the sea he went one morning, impatient because the others did not come quickly, and the sea took him and he was no more. The waves were evil that day, deeply curling, foam-taloned paws tigerish in their reach. When he ran down the shore, beside himself at the news, he knew that the waves would not return the child they had snatched. Nevertheless, for weeks they had not given up hope.

Now, remembering the exquisite boy, the child who looked so strangely like Cynthia and was inwardly so much himself that he embodied the hope that Cynthia might yet be the creature imagined, now he was glad that the sea had never returned the child. He need not, nay he could not, remember what his dead son's face was. Had he seen him dripping and limp, his limbs hanging, his head thrown back, he could not have forgotten, and there was mercy in never having seen. Now Robert could remain alive for him, for ever. But he grieved that he had sometimes forgotten the child's soul, which was his own offspring, and had seen only the child's shape and body, the grey eyes, the straight black hair, and looking upon this little creature which Cynthia had made, he had sometimes been harsh to him, as on the day when Robert had wanted to escape his school and had run away to fly a kite he had made, and in anger he had led the child back to his tasks. And he had stood over his son sometimes as cruelly as Cynthia did, to make him work at stupid things at night, long lines of figures to add, pages to read, maps to

draw and colour, things which the boy did not understand or value.

On one such night, he remembered, Robert had looked up from the book. His eyes were dark and listening. 'Hark,' so he had whispered. 'I hear the wind crying. What makes the wind sad?'

'Come, come,' he had answered, he the father. 'It is time for bed and you still have pages to go.'

Had he been a good father, he would have tossed the books aside and taken the child outside into the night to find the wind, and to discover, perhaps, why it moaned. He had robbed himself of that hour. No one else had compelled him or denied him. Cynthia's will had been his will, and he had punished her by punishing his son.

Yet he had loved her. What he could not forgive her was that something in her did not allow her to love with joy. She had not given him pleasure, and now that he was old, now that he was dying, he knew that only pleasure, rising if possible into joy, was what life was meant for, and created for, else why were there the senses and why the power for laughter, and why, at last, memory? Sorrow escaped the memory and only joy remained.

AH, it was for joy that he had married his little Christine, and for joy he had loved her, and though in the end she had gone away he did not blame her, for he had been born too soon and she too late. Somewhere at this very moment, perhaps, she was finding her own joy. It gave him comfort that in wild generosity—insane generosity, senility, his eldest son had said in anger—he had settled money upon her, fastened it to her so that she could not escape it by wasting it, a gift repeated year after year, so that she could enjoy herself with anyone she chose.

There was, of course, the wound. He avoided it. There was no healing of wounds possible now. He had heard from her last only a few months ago. She was abroad, in the sunshine. He could not imagine Christine except in sunshine.

'Dear Captain—' Thus she had always called him, half-playfully, because she had been used to saying that he was the master of her fate, the captain of her soul. In her fashion, he supposed, she had loved him, a wild wayward child, fatherless too soon, and brought up by a foolish mother. It was his

age that had attracted her and his age that had repelled her. He had feared it and known it true when she turned her head away, when—

Ah well, she had kissed him sweetly and with every effort, and he was grateful for all her gifts. He regretted nothing that he had done for and with Christine. It had been all his dreams come true when she had been willing to marry him. When had he even dared to make such dreams? She had freed him from all that had been wrong with his soul. She had made it possible for him to dream again. Three foolish, gay, happy, desperate years, he clinging to strength that had faded, to desire that flickered into flame, to wakefulness, continually tricking him, continually tricked by the need for sleep.

He began to go home early, at first. Then he began to stay home. And because he could not bear to see her face cloud, he had begun to let her go with another man, some other man, and knew it was the beginning of the inevitable end, when one day she would come to him.

So she had come, very gentle and tender and coaxing, to burrow that curly head of hers into his shoulder and to sob quietly at last, without speaking a word.

'Now, now,' he had said, holding her close to him, frightened to know that he felt not the least passion when he did so, though feeling and appreciating all else. There was the tragedy and mystery of it, that one could appreciate, could sense, could know to the very limit the value of what he held in his arms, and yet care no more to possess it. At that moment he had known he was old.

'Tell me what is wrong,' he had said.

'Nothing.' She shook her curls against his cheek.

'Something,' he said.

'I love you so,' she sobbed. 'I know I love you. There's nobody but you. I don't want anybody but you. You are wiser and better than any man I ever met—or ever will meet. If I didn't have you I'd be lost. You are everything to me—lover, husband, friend, father.'

Dangerous, dangerous protestation, far too much, far too swift, filled with panic, the mind fighting the heart, the clinging hands resisting the heart, and the heart operating itself, beating to its own rhythm, off on its way.

'I'd be all those things in any case,' he had said in his calmest voice. 'Except, maybe,

husband? You might not always want me for husband. Remember I told you that when you proposed to me?' For she had actually done the proposing. He would never have dared to take her had she not insisted, thrown herself at his head—handsome head she called it, though even then white as spindrift. He took great comfort now in remembering that she had wanted to marry him when marriage had not been in his mind.

'Preposterous, my dear,' he whispered softly into the present moonlit darkness. His dry lips remembered the very words.

'I hate young men,' she had cried.

Now why should she have hated young men? His mind pried cunningly among its memories. Something had happened, of course. Some young man had gone his way, perhaps. Young men were strange these days, the powerful ones, the strong ones. They did not want to take up the burdens of marriage, they said, not the responsibilities, not the possibilities. No one knew what was ahead. Something like that, perhaps, had happened to Christine, and she had gone wild for a bit. Was it the same one who got her away in the end? That sunburned boy, the one with the yellow hair and the bright blue eyes, shallow eyes, he always thought, because they were so cobalt a blue, hard, and without shadows.

'But you mustn't hate young men,' he had told her, soothing her, his hand stroking the nape of her neck. 'I'm an old fellow, you know, and this is all very temporary. I'll have to die one of these days, years ahead of you. My body is busy getting ready for the next big change. Then you must go and find your young man—waiting around the corner, probably. We've always known that, haven't we?' And because he was so certain that the young man was waiting around the corner, he had gone on in the most sensible of tones. 'Actually, Christine, I've often thought it would give me comfort if I saw him, you know, passed you on to him, so to speak, before I go, so that I might feel comfortably sure that you're well taken care of and not at the mercy of anybody who wants to take on a lovely young widow.'

She had cried out at this: 'Don't be morbid, please!'

He had been struck by the exactitude of the word. Perhaps there was something morbid in his interest in a young man who

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

could feel all the passion that he could only remember. 'I only want you to be quite free and not think you have to wait until I'm out of the way.'

Naturally, she had denied such thoughts, her red underlip pouting very much and agitation in her voice and tears. She was honest, fighting herself, refusing to acknowledge what he had already accepted. But, of course, he had opened the door, and she went out. Not at once, it is true, nor at first even to stay. There were flutterings, a luncheon prolonged, a dance, a week-end with friends, a holiday tour, for which he did not feel strong enough. Then she did not come back.

HE had a great time getting her to come to see him—not to sleep with him. She confused the two. To sleep alone was all he needed now. To see her would be his need until he died. But she was uneasy with him. When she came back, a new ring upon her hand, he had asked for the young man with the blue eyes.

'I couldn't,' she had said, and fell to her knees beside him as he sat in his chair. The wretched slow death had already begun its work in him and he could not get up. She had him at her mercy, and he could only sit stroking her hair and feeling the soft nape of her neck.

'I ought to be here taking care of you,' she had whispered, her voice broken, and she had wet his hand with her tears.

'What good would you be to me?' he inquired. 'I have a day nurse and a night nurse. The day nurse is middle-aged and she complains of her feet. So I tell her to sit down. "What a pity it is, dear Mrs Brightly," I say to her, "that you and I cannot exchange places! Here am I, longing to be on my feet, and you longing to be off yours." It shuts her up, but only for a bit. The night nurse is another piece of goods—a little like you, but not nearly so pretty, though pretty, and with a young man who apparently sleeps in the garden. I told her to take a pillow to him the other night because the marble bench is so hard, and even suggested that she take two. Whereupon she was shocked at me.'

'You are just as ribald as ever,' Christine had said faintly, and lifting her head she had tried to smile.

'There is nothing so lovely as the eyes of a

beautiful woman smiling through wet lashes.' He said this to Christine, and she got up at once and pulled his ears.

'Oh, you won't be serious,' she pouted. 'I don't believe you ever have loved me. I dare say you are glad to have me gone so that you can be left with your two nurses, who spoil you horribly. You look like an old tomcat, as sleek and pampered as anything.'

'I am pampered,' he agreed, 'but I pay for it.'

He wanted to ask if Hard Blue Eyes was treating her well, but the question stuck. She might suspect him again of morbidity. Since he was dead from the waist down, this was not pleasant. They had talked a little while, and she had called in the night nurse and bade her be sure to put rum and nutmeg into his hot milk which he drank before he slept.

Night nurse had been stiff and had merely said: 'I do that already, madam,' and had given her white skirts an extra swirl as she went out of the room.

'I shan't be jealous of that one,' Christine had remarked.

'As if you had any right to be jealous!' he had retorted.

'I shall always be jealous of you,' she had said to this. 'You're still the captain of my soul.' Then she had gone away.

OUT of that strange and not altogether happy half-hour he had now as his permanent possession the jewelled look of her eyes smiling behind wet lashes. It was true that something of her was his, something which youth could not value and could not keep. But he had it—not quite her soul, of course, but the profound appreciation of her young beauty. It is only the old who understand the monstrous beauty of the young. This was the meaning of age. . . . He found he had been gazing out into the darkness of his room. The moon had retreated behind a cloud. Indeed, the sky was clouded, as he now perceived when, with effort, he turned his head. He felt horribly weak, and there was something tight about his heart. The creeping coldness, which had begun at the ends of the nerves in his feet, a hundred little hands, tiny and cold, tangled in his muscles and among his veins.

The door opened and the night nurse came in, bringing with her the scent of dew-wet

leaves. 'How naughty of you not to turn on the light,' she said gaily. She fumbled for the switch and in an instant the room sprang into brightness. But she was the brightest. Her hair was damp with the garden mist, her cheeks were red and her lips curving. She gave a cry of terror.

'Mr Norton!'

He would have liked to have spoken to comfort her. He would have liked to have said in final gratitude to life: 'How good of you, my dear, to have given me such a sight to die with!'

But he could not speak.

Fighting for Time

Britain's Clock Industry

FRANK HUNTLY

THERE is an industry in Britain that is almost an epic. Its story reads like a fairy-tale. Twelve years ago the enterprise scarcely existed. Almost every clock and watch was imported—some 12,000,000 in a year. The labour force in our own industry had fallen to a paltry 4000. To-day, seventy undertakings, for strategic reasons widely dispersed through Scotland, Wales, and England, and employing 35,000 men and women, are making virtually every timing instrument the country needs, and supplying an increasing part of the demands of other countries as well. One factory alone spreads over close on 85 acres.

These are astronomic figures, yet the business of making watches and clocks is by no means new to Britain. Once this country had the greatest timepiece-making industry in the world. With the population at ten millions, 70,000 people were engaged in the work. For nearly three centuries British skill at the craft set a world standard in horology, attracting the cream of the world's orders for high-class workmanship. People were still using the crudest forms of iron weight-driven mechanisms, with errors up to an hour daily, when Thomas Tompion, born the son of an English blacksmith over three hundred years ago, adapted to domestic

clocks and watches the principles of the pendulum and balance-spring invented by the Dutch mathematician and scientist Huygens. Thereby, Tompion elevated timekeeping to the level of mechanised precision.

The career of this genius—and with him British clockmaking supremacy—really began when, scenting useful developments, he tried to regulate the wheels of a meat-roasting jack. And it is an astounding fact that, despite 19th-century progress which placed accurate timekeepers within the reach of everyone, the timepieces that Tompion turned out in his forty and more years of working life are still accounted world wonders. Some of them, to this day, run for three months between windings; even twelve-month periods are no exception. Since his work associated him with most of the scientists and mathematicians of his time, it was hardly surprising that, on its founding, he was appointed clock-maker to the Royal Observatory, Greenwich—an institution which from that day to this has regulated time for the world.

They buried old Tompion in Westminster Abbey, a fitting resting-place for one who had devoted the best years of his life to the measurement of time. Beside him, appropriately enough, lies his apprentice, 'Honest George Graham,' who, two years after his

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

employer's death, invented the 'dead-beat escapement,' which is found in nearly all good clocks even now, just as Mudge's lever escapement, made two and a half centuries ago, continues a feature of all good watches.

IT is, however, one thing to establish a pre-eminence by a high level of craftsmanship; it is quite another to maintain it against cheap foreign competition whipped up to a calculated intensity. For at least twenty years, until the Second World War, there cascaded annually into Britain some 8,000,000 cheap clocks and movements—seven-eighths at an average cost of 2s. 1d. each; the rest at 3s. 4d. They came to us from America, Switzerland, and Germany, and together these countries beat British clocks and watches out of our own market. Indeed, while our goods still enjoyed prestige sales both at home and abroad on quality grounds, we also held the doubtful record of buying the cheapest watches in the world. The runners-up were the Chinese!

Imagine the predicament in which we were bound to find ourselves when war reduced these imports virtually to nil. By the middle of hostilities there was a desperate need for over 7,000,000 alarm-clocks alone. As imports from Germany and Switzerland had ceased, this enormous shortage was partially met by American and Canadian shipments and by the output from several new factories specially built in Australia. The British industry, founded upon manual craftsmanship, had been too conservative for large-scale application of machinery in clock-making and watchmaking. Thus, when war called most watchmakers away to manufacture and maintain precision instruments for A.A. gunnery, radiolocation, and the Air Ministry, what was left of the civilian industry came literally to a standstill.

That German technicians had for some years been busy in the watchmaking sphere was of course well known to Britain, though we seemed strangely apathetic to the fact that German activity, supremely machine-tooled and heavily subsidised, had been boosted to a new height, not alone for commercial competition, but with a much more urgent motive—war; for there is an intimate connection between clocks and bomb-fuses and precision war instruments. Soon after Germany's surrender, representatives of the

British watch and clock trade inspected several German clock-factories and found them stacked high with clocks and watches cheek by jowl with timing mechanisms, springs, bomb-fuses, and delicate precision instruments of war at every stage of manufacture and development.

In a hastily-conceived attempt to keep pace with German ingenuity, plans for resuscitating our own industry were begun soon after the rise of Adolf Hitler, and a number of new factories were opened between then and September 1939. When war came, and particularly after the fall of France, practically all these factories were promptly switched to production of aircraft instruments and the like, for the struggle had at once shown itself to be one based on the efficiency of time-related instruments; no vehicle could take the road, no warship sail or gun take aim, no aircraft undertake long flights with accuracy, without instruments. And these our clock factories provided. As well, every clock-maker and watchmaker possessing a reasonably well-equipped workshop was pressed into service for the repair of these vital mechanisms. Had we not had these few factories and hundreds of individual workshops, and rapidly developed their resources, the War's outcome might have been very different.

PREVIOUSLY, only because our old craftsmen (who built the trade) would not take kindly to mechanisation was the commerce lost to the competition of foreigners, the bulk of whom proceeded to market timepieces under the brand of British names and disguised as British manufactures. Appreciating the immense value of a first-class clock and watch industry as a war potential, Germany forged the world's largest business in timepieces, exporting annually 15,000,000 clocks alone. To do so the government had given it a 40 per cent. subsidy and imposed a 120 per cent. *ad valorem* protective duty. Two other great powers did likewise, and with identical aims—provocative or preventive war. Japan levied import duties of 100 per cent., while Russia favoured her quietly intensified industry with import levies up to 300 per cent.

After hostilities the Admiralty, the Ministry of Supply and Aircraft Production, and the Board of Trade resolved on wholesale main-

FIGHTING FOR TIME

tenance of the British industry, so as to have available in case of future war need the facilities for turning out ample and unrivalled aircraft, tank, and marine instruments, chronometers, clocks, watches, and the vast requirements of time- and shell-fuses, detonators, and other intricate mechanisms. This continued production is also contributing handsomely to the success of the Government's Development Area policy, thereby curtailing large-scale unemployment. At the end of the past year, it was estimated, these and other areas should between them be manufacturing 6,000,000 clocks annually, filling home needs and leaving a big surplus for export—export to, among other regions, the Middle East, where, before the War, a substantial footing was enjoyed by Japan, who had earlier wrested from Germany that country's last remaining foothold in the Far Eastern market. One large Japanese factory was producing 6,000,000 watches a year. Britain now shares these markets with Canada, U.S.A., France, and Switzerland.

Nevertheless, the old snags are now re-appearing. Germany and Japan are again cutting in, the higher living standards of the present major producer-countries making it difficult, almost as of old, to compete with suppliers whose mechanics will work for 1s. 6d. an hour as against 3s. and 4s. It is to be hoped that by subsidy or other means these discrepancies will be adjusted. Regrettably, in the past, wages and conditions even within our own industry did not offer attractive enough prospects to youths with ambition. But plans since sponsored by the Ministry of Labour and the British Horological Institute, claimed as the oldest trade association in the world, have brought about improved conditions of work, which have drawn fair numbers of workers of both sexes whose inclinations are towards fine and scientific mechanisms.

RAPIDLY developing production is providing increasingly alluring prospects in the making and servicing of new and efficient timepieces, not alone of the normal types, but also in the scientific field, for the tempo of modern living demands ever-improving methods of keeping check on the age-old enemy. It still suffices to carry about with us a little box of wonders boasting some

150 pieces, whose assembly has required nearly 400 operations, and which ticks 172,800 times every day. Lately, however, there have appeared on the market such ingenuities as a wrist-watch with an alarm which sounds like the chirp of a cricket, and a clock that tells at a glance the time anywhere in the world. There is also a timepiece with a mechanism so delicately balanced as to be kept perpetually in motion by a self-winding contrivance actuated by changes of temperature as small as one degree Fahrenheit. Newton would have turned green with envy at the mere thought of a clock that worked indefinitely, without human intervention. Even the chronometer was unknown to him, in practice; yet only a decade after Newton's death another Briton, John Harrison, devised a timekeeper accurate enough to determine the longitude at sea. His 'No. 4,' being well within the tolerance which the Government were prepared to accept, won for Harrison its prize of £20,000—though it took Harrison a deal of time and trouble to establish his title to it!

For about three hundred years Greenwich Observatory relied on pendulum clocks, and their exactitude was maintained by a most careful check on the stars, until recently regarded as to the *n*th degree infallible. As the constellations cross the meridian at the same time daily, they were minutely observed through a transit telescope. But in the ceaseless striving after absolute perfection, the Observatory clocks decided to 'go electric.' W. H. Shortt had perfected his first 'free' pendulum, which was impelled electrically; and this was for long the last word in accuracy. Shortt's installations have since become famed for their performance in the observatories of the world; one of many (in Paris Observatory) ran throughout 1935 with accuracy to one-tenth of a second, of which there are some 30,000,000 in a year—seemingly a fantastic precision.

Even this degree of accuracy has, however, now been exceeded. With the quartz crystal it is possible to detect variations as infinitesimal as .001 of a second per day, and these close determinations have produced the astonishing revelation that our 'Standard Clock,' the earth, is indeed not the faultless model we had supposed—that, in fact, the length of the day varies by minute amounts.

The Astronomer Royal holds the view that even the performance at present being

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

achieved by crystal-operated clocks can be bettered, precision of one part in a thousand million of the time measured being within the vision of timekeeping science. Yet, while that perfective wonder is expected to be of enormous aid to astronomers in checking the uniformity of the earth's rotation, it is of little practical moment to most mortals, whose chief concern is punctuality for engagements, catching the right train to work, and not missing the last one home.

Nevertheless, there is a lot more in it than that for some thousands of folk to whom maximum precision in timekeeping is vital. The degree of accuracy now attained enables Greenwich to send almost dead-accurate signals to scientists observing eclipses in the remotest ends of the earth. It makes possible the standardising of a great amount of equipment which is indispensable to industry as well as to navigation.

If there is to be still further improvement, it may come through the medium of an atomic clock, such as has been demonstrated in America; it is governed by vibrations of ammonia molecules, and is claimed to be, in its own sphere, an absolute measure of time. It may be from vested interests, or for other reason, but the heads of the present British industry are sceptical as to the atomic clock's prospects with the masses. There

would, however, seem little reason to doubt the near-future possibility of radio-controlled timepieces. There may even come a day when we shall learn how to make watches run without oil, sealing up the works in a vacuum. Then perhaps our watches will be willing to forget about overhauls, and even to survive not too serious accidents.

There used to be a tax on time—five shillings on every clock in the land. Thousands of humble homes then dispensed with the domestic clock, and innkeepers found it profitable to install one in every public room. Only when clockmakers 'struck' did the levy die, reinstituting the people's right to know the time of day free of charge. Begun as a hobby, the measurement of time is now contemplated with the same assurance as the fact that night follows day. It has reached a stage when the community is so time-conscious that the fount-head's smallest deviation from continuity or accuracy would upset every one of us far more than a hold-up of water, gas, or electricity. Attainment of this ideal has been a purely British achievement, and, by shaping our present bid for world markets to this heritage of accuracy allied to good craftsmanship and unaltered output, the clocks and watches of men the world over may once again become products as British as Greenwich.

Betwixt the Hills

*There is a place with Spring aflame,
Touched with a tenderness that stills,
That bears the ever-gracious name—
'Betwixt the Hills.'*

*The splendour of the year awakes
A joy whose tranquil sweetness fills
That lovely vale, where glory breaks,
Betwixt the hills.*

*There in that glen my soul would stray,
Blest by a majesty that thrills,
And heralds forth Spring's dawning day,
Betwixt the hills.*

*And there no sorrow stills the song
Sung by the murm'ring mountain-rills,
That bear their singing waves along,
Betwixt the hills.*

GILBERT RAE.

Is Life Electrical?

LANGSTON DAY

IN Northern Canada scientists are attempting to control the flight of birds by wireless. The experiments are being carried out by Dr Albert Hochbaum and a team of ornithological experts at the Delta Waterfowl Research Station in Manitoba. A low-powered radar-set has been tried on a flight of duck, and at about 200 yards' range the birds have broken formation suddenly and wheeled in circles for several minutes before flying on again. In the B.B.C. Children's Hour, Lieutenant-Commander Peter Scott, well-known as a bird-watcher, said that radar control of birds appeared to have been established.

This may come as a surprise to many people, but actually it has long been known that most, perhaps all, living creatures are influenced by radiations of various frequencies. There is a school of thought which sees living cells as electrical oscillators that are kept going by cosmic radiation, and there is a new and steadily growing science of diagnosis and treatment of disease which depends upon electronic machines.

Early in the 1920's it was noticed that pigeons released near German transmitting-stations could not pick up their bearings but continued to circle round. A few minutes after the transmission ended they recovered, and flew without hesitation to their pigeon-cotes. This supported the theory, advanced by Georges Lakhovsky and other scientists, that the semicircular canals of the ear form a special directional wireless receiving-set. They consist of passages lying in three planes at right angles to one another, and therefore they can orient a creature in three-dimensional space. Invertebrates do not possess these canals, but they have membraneous vesicles which serve a like purpose. Some creatures, such as Japanese dancing-mice, have only a two-dimensional apparatus, which provides

an explanation of their peculiar movements.

According to the new scientific doctrine, all living things emit radiations of some particular wavelength. And according to our present knowledge, these wavelengths range from wireless waves, whose length is anything between 30,000 metres and a few millimetres, down to the mysterious cosmic radiations, which have a wavelength round about $\cdot 0002$ of an Angström unit. (An Angström unit is equal to one hundred-millionth of a centimetre.)

Altogether these radiations cover sixty octaves, of which our eyes can pick up only one, which is that of visible light-waves. It so happens that glow-worms emit radiations of between 375 and 700 trillions of vibrations a second, so that our eyes can pick them up. Other living things give out radiations of different frequencies. The rootlets of growing plants, for instance, send out radiations belonging to the ultra-violet end of the spectrum, and this has actually been photographed by the scientists Gurvich and Frank. Male moths are able to fly straight to a female, detecting with their aerial-like antennae the radiations of the cells in her ovaries. Burying-beetles are directed to their food by the oscillations of the decomposing matter on which they feed. Bats locate insects also by oscillations.

As far as reception goes, birds, bats, and insects flying in the air have a far greater range and sensibility than animals on the ground. This is because the electric potential increases as you rise above the earth's surface—a phenomenon that accounts for the sparks which fly from the ice-axes of mountaineers. The electrical tension also rises when a bird flies against the wind—which is why falcons face the wind before pouncing on their prey. So by flying high or low, taking into consideration the direction of the wind, a flight-

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

ing bird regulates its electrical capacity, and, guided by its living directional apparatus, it finds its way to its feeding-ground. In like manner fish are helped by auto-electrification produced by the friction of the water. Other creatures need extra aid. This in mammals is provided by the cochlea of the ear, which is a sort of aerial, wound up in the form of a flattened tube filled with conducting fluid, while reptiles arrange their flattened coils in the form of a small receiver.

TURNING to the microscopic world, the nucleus of each cell in the body of a living creature is a tiny electrical apparatus. Each of the small twisted filaments, composed of organic materials or mineral conductors and covered by a tubular membrane of insulating substance, forms an electrical circuit, which emits radiation of some particular frequency. The 200 quintillion cells in the human body are like a gigantic orchestra, vibrating in harmony if the person is in good health.

The cells of the human body oscillate with very high frequencies under the influence of cosmic rays given out by the stars. In wireless-wave reception the receiving aerial is situated in a variable electromagnetic field created by the waves which are propagated from the transmitter. And it is by a similar mechanism that the cells in our bodies vibrate. Healthy cells oscillate with the correct frequency. Certain microbes oscillate with a higher or lower frequency, and if they are introduced into the body they try to compel the healthy cells to vibrate differently. Their action is similar to that of a forced vibration induced by a small heterodyne generator in a resonating circuit tuned up with the incoming oscillator.

A war of radiations may be fought, and often it is as difficult for medical science to destroy the malignant microbes without injury to the patient as it is to knock out without injury to your own dog the dog who attacks him. One of the worst examples of this is cancer. In cancer, hydrocarbons are formed, which because of their radio-activity, act on the chromosomes and destroy them,

leaving only the mitochondria. These mitochondria, having a far greater frequency than the chromosomes, continue to oscillate and develop, and also to acquire a cellular membrane. In this way are formed so-called 'neoplastic cells,' which force the neighbouring cells to oscillate with a frequency characteristic of cancer cells.

For a long time it has been known that cancer is affected in some curious way by the nature of the soil. An intensive survey of the cancer statistics in Paris showed that there is a low cancer density on the sandy soils and a high density on the plastic clay. Why is this? Sandy formations are easily penetrable by cosmic rays, but clay, marl, iron ores, and other strata act as reflecting screens. Intense currents are set up, and by upsetting the oscillations of healthy cells cancer is caused.

Many different observations support the theory that cancer and other diseases are brought about by upsetting the oscillations of healthy cells. For example, there is a natural harmony in the radio-activity of drinking water which is drawn from local wells and the oscillations in the living cells of those who live on the spot, and statistics show that in some cases where the local water-supply has been replaced by water from a distant source the occurrence of cancer has risen suddenly.

Can this theory of life be demonstrated? Is it of any practical advantage, for instance, to sufferers? The science of radiesthesia, as it is called, is in its infancy, but already more than thirty qualified doctors in this country are practising it, and many more are sending patients to non-medical practitioners.

A number of 'electronic machines' have been invented which diagnose by picking up the vibrations of the different organs, test the condition of the blood, and so on. Further, various types of apparatus directly stimulate the oscillations of healthy cells or help to eliminate those of different frequency. Many startling results have been claimed, and in several other countries, particularly Italy, where the Pope underwent treatment by one of these machines, these new methods are making rapid progress.

Madame Varnáy

IAN MERCER

BEFORE the War, when currency restrictions were unheard of, I frequently used to run into Madame Varnáy. In those days, she used to travel with the sun. She springed in London, summered in Stockholm, autumned at Vichy, and wintered at Monte Carlo. But her spiritual home was, without doubt, Monte Carlo, for only against the sham-Gothic background of that fantastic Principality did she ever appear completely real. The blatantly-dyed hair, which was dressed in a style popular in the late 'eighties; the face rendered expressionless by a series of operations by various plastic surgeons up and down Europe; the ultra high-heeled shoes; the black ebony walking-stick; and the long scraggy neck that was always half-hidden, morning, noon, and night, behind a magnificent collar of diamonds and emeralds—all these were natural phenomena to the habitués of the Sporting Club, the Casino, and the Hôtel de Paris. To them, only the normal appeared odd. On the other hand, at Vichy, Madame Varnáy was regarded as a trifle peculiar; in London, as eccentric; and in Stockholm, as mad.

When I first encountered her, at the Sporting Club in 1937, she was reputed to be seventy-three. She had big blue eyes, hands like the talons of a bird of prey, and the manners generally attributed to a fishwife. But, in her own way, she was highly amusing.

For some obscure reason she took a fancy to me, and I attended quite a lot of her dinner-parties. Given in her villa at Cap d'Ail, they were astonishing affairs judged even by the standards of those days. The guests always numbered thirty-six, and the menu never varied. You got oysters, potato soup, *poulet à la grand'mère*, and a sweet which resembled in appearance off-white soap-suds and tasted like frozen rice-pudding. As

drink, you had a sweet champagne of so inferior a brand that nobody but Madame Varnáy would ever have dared to put it on the table. But the damage to your digestion, which could usually be remedied by a visit to the chemist and a day in bed, was more than compensated for by the conversation and behaviour of the hostess.

In a place and era famous for 'characters,' she stood head and shoulders above all her rivals. In a husky voice suggestive of a lifetime's addiction to Virginia cigarettes and Scotch whisky she reeled off story after story, each one illustrating the weakness of someone great, rich, or celebrated. There was not a soul worth knowing she had not met, and all had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. A king to whom she referred familiarly as 'Dickie' was not, it seemed, the Prince Charming the world believed him to be. He drank, beat his wife, cheated at cards, and was so mean it hurt him every time he had to sign a cheque. Lord Goodrington, proprietor of the *Daily Sun*, took dope. Lady Ursula Comyns—'poor dear!'—had been sent off to a mental home again. Bobbie Tollington had had another cheque returned. . . .

At intervals throughout the meal, Madame Varnáy took up her ebony walking-stick and beat a fierce tattoo on the floor with it—a signal that she required the presence of her butler. This imposing individual, who was dressed like an admiral in musical comedy, at once rushed to his employer's side.

'Get rid of that damned girl with the squint,' she said once. 'It's bad luck.' On another occasion, she snapped: 'If that fool persists in putting pepper in the soup, I'll come and strike him with my stick.'

Her accent was peculiar, and not at all easy to place. At one moment you thought

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

she was French, at another German, and at yet another plain Cockney. She dropped her aitches, clipped her g's, and constructed sentences which left her hearers dumb with astonishment. It took me quite a while to realise that the 'rather boring bitch near by,' of which she often spoke, was a private *plage*, and had nothing whatever to do with the kennels.

After dinner, we withdrew to a stuffy, overheated salon decorated and furnished apparently at about the time of Queen Victoria's early widowhood. There we drank the very worst coffee it has ever been my misfortune to taste, and sipped cheap liqueur from minute glasses which had evidently been made for a doll's-house.

At ten o'clock precisely, Madame Varnáy rose stiffly from her chair, and announced loudly: 'I'm off to my bed. The bottles and the cigars they are locked away, so there's nothing to detain you. Good-night!'

I OFTEN wondered how Madame Varnáy managed to attract to her house the many celebrities I met there. One night, I found out, from a fellow-guest, a well-known American columnist. 'She's some personality,' he admitted, as we drove back together to Monte Carlo. 'But it's not that which draws people to her. She lives in her late husband's reflected glory.'

'Who was he?' I asked.

'Professor Varnáy.'

'You mean the Hungarian who wrote that thing on hypothyroidism?' The American nodded. 'But he's been dead for more than twenty years.'

'Sure, he has. There's nothing like death for advancing your reputation. Particularly if you leave behind you a widow with Madame Varnáy's genius for publicity.'

The next time I met Madame, which was at a cocktail party given by the Peruvian Minister in Stockholm, she herself told me something of her husband. 'He was a man most extraordinaire,' she said; 'an aristocrat with a talent unique for the research work. You must have been hearing of the great book he wrote about the thyroid gland.'

I said I had naturally heard of it. Madame Varnáy inclined her head, and as the diamond and emerald necklace swung backwards and forwards across her ample bosom it struck me that every day she was growing more and

more like a fossilised ostrich. She was a loud-mouthed corpse with restless eyes and an indomitable spirit.

That was in July of 1939. Two months later, we were at war, and in the subsequent hurly-burly I forgot all about Madame Varnáy. Then, only the other week, while I was holidaying at Monte Carlo, I saw her pass by the café outside which I was sitting. She was riding in one of those ancient horse-carriages which you only see in these days in the Principality and museums.

'Wonderful old girl,' said a man next to me, addressing his companion. 'Madame Varnáy, you know, the widow of that scientist type. Must be ninety, if she's a day. But do you think she'll admit it? Not she! When the Nazis came here she gave her age as fifty-eight, and as she was in the habit of talking too much about them they shot her into a concentration camp in the Ardèche. It ought to have killed her, but it didn't. She emerged as perky as ever, had her face lifted for about the thousandth time, and now she's back in the swim. Marvellous, I call it.'

I called it the same, and that evening, with a friend of mine from Birmingham, I wandered into the bar of the Hôtel de Paris in the hope of encountering the formidable lady who had contrived to get herself jailed at the age of eighty. She was there, sitting alone at the bow-window that overlooks the Casino square.

I was on the point of greeting her, when my friend grasped me by the arm and said excitedly: 'Good lord! There's old Mrs Varney. Thought she was dead long ago!'

'That, my dear chap,' I remarked, 'is the celebrated Madame Varnáy.'

'She may call herself that now, but at home in the Midlands she's known as plain Mrs Varney.'

'Are you sure you're not mistaken?'

'Not on your life! You wouldn't find two of her sort about. Known her since I was a kid. Her husband was a grocer. An amazing bloke, whose life reads like a standard success-story. Started at the bottom of the tree as an errand-boy, and ended up a millionaire. Funnily enough, when he died, Mrs Varney vanished.'

'How long ago would that be?' I inquired.

'About . . . about twenty years.'

At that moment, Madame Varnáy looked up. An odd contortion of the face which passed with her for a smile was already trembling on the corners of her mouth when

she noticed my companion. The smile died stillborn, and she deliberately turned her back on us and looked out of the window.

Three days later, she had a heart attack in the Sporting Club, and died in an ambulance on her way to hospital. I attended the

funeral, and as I listened to the priest reciting the list of her many virtues I could not help thinking that somewhere or other Madame Varnáy was enjoying a good laugh, for, with all her faults, she had a highly-developed and unflinching sense of humour.

The Days of Cricket Wagering

COLIN BROOKS

TO a large extent the foundations of the early popularity of cricket were laid in the heavy wagering indulged in by practically all its followers. In the first days there was scarcely a match played without extensive public betting on the result.

In 1711 there was a match played between Kent and an all-England side, and as a sequel to it there was a lawsuit in which it was sought to recover money that had been wagered and won on the match, but which had not been paid. On this occasion the court delivered itself of this weighty utterance: 'Cricket, to be sure, is a manly game, and not bad in itself; but it is the ill use that is made of it, by betting above £10 on it, that is bad.'

Cricket enthusiasts were betting in hundreds by this time, and it was not long before they were betting thousands on matches, and arranging the matches purely for the sake of the betting. Thus when the time came to draft a code of laws for the game, the mention of betting could no more be excluded from such a code than it could be excluded from the rules of the Jockey Club.

It was part of the game, and 'the committee of noblemen and gentlemen' that met on that historic occasion at the Star and Garter, in Pall Mall, to draft the first real constitution of the game saw to it that a statement went in as follows: 'Bets.—If the notches of one player are laid against another, the bet

depends on both innings, unless otherwise specified. If one party beats the other in one innings, the notches in the first innings shall determine the bet. But if the other party goes in a second time, then the bet must be determined by the numbers on the score.'

This was in the nature of official sanction, if not encouragement, and the wagering on cricket flourished mightily. Fives, tens, fifties, and then hundreds of pounds, and later thousands, were betted on matches played on commons and village greens. It soon became no longer enough to bet on the simple result of a match. That was too unsatisfying, so the betters began to wager on the notches that would be scored by individual strikers.

IN such circumstances, it was but natural, indeed inevitable, that some strange and unwholesome customers should come to be associated with the game. One of these was the notorious player known as Die-Game, of Headley, Hampshire. He used to be matched at single-handed cricket for a hundred guineas a time against other young 'sportsmen' of his class. It came about that at the height of his career this Die-Game, or Bry as his real name was, was arrested at Richmond on a charge of horse-stealing, and in due course was sentenced to death at the Kingston Assizes, but two days later he was reprieved. This was in 1762.

In the early thirties of the 18th century there were many matches played for considerable stakes, the backers generally belonging to 'the nobility and gentry.' The all-conquering men of Kent must have made a great deal of money for their supporters. They were constantly being pitted against Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, and London, and the stakes frequently rose high.

The chief alternative as a form of cricket gambling was the single-handed match, and we are told that one of these, between two celebrated sportsmen of the time who kept their identity secret, took place one day in 1737 on Kennington Common, when one of them owed a heavy defeat chiefly to the fact that in his first innings he was struck so severe a blow by the ball that he was knocked down and 'lay stupid for a long time.'

In 1751 a series of three matches was played, which seemed to be the high-water mark of wagering cricket. Apart from stakes of £1500, it was known that a lump sum of £20,000 was betted on the result. The main characters in this match were the Earl of Sandwich and the Earl of March, both of whom, it was arranged, should play themselves. The challenge, which came from the Earl of Sandwich, was that he, with a team of gentlemen from Eton College, would play against any other eleven gentlemen in England whom the Earl of March might choose, so long as they were 'not professional match-makers.'

The Duke of Kingston and Lord Howe played on the Eton side, and 'the players were dressed in the handsomest manner, in silk jackets, trousers, velvet caps, and so forth.' The matches were played at Newmarket on a Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of the same week. England, who were great favourites, won the first, Eton the second, and England the third and the rubber.

SO much being constantly at stake, it was to be expected that some rowdy scenes would be witnessed, though good temper was nearly always shown. But one day in 1762 a match was played between Kent and Surrey near Carshalton, the prospects of which had for weeks before been discussed and betted on. Many thousands of guineas were wagered. Surrey were ahead by 50 on the first innings when an argument arose as to whether one of the players had been caught

out or not. One word led to another, and soon a free-for-all was raging and the cricket pitch took on the semblance of a battlefield. Heads were cracked and bones were broken, and five challenges were made to duels. In the end, the bodies were carried off the field and all bets were declared off.

Again, when the gentlemen of Surrey and Dartford met to settle a match for a hundred guineas a side on the Artillery ground, before twelve thousand spectators (each of whom paid 6d. for admission—a sum equivalent to 10s. to-day), the play was stopped and had to be postponed for two days because a riot took place on the ground. The crowd got it into its head that the play was not being conducted quite fairly, and, as the betting on the match had been very heavy, tempers soon became uncontrollable. Limbs were broken and numbers of people seriously hurt.

WITH so much money ready for wagering and the rules of the game not yet solidified, it was not surprising that there should be some strange freak matches arranged with stakes depending on them. One of the strangest was played for a good wager in Tothill Fields, Westminster, between two butchers from St James's Market, the conditions being that the wickets should be placed on each side of a pool of water twenty-four yards across, and that the men should play naked in the water. The match was duly played, and lasted for about an hour.

The Prince of Wales, who became George the Third, was an enthusiastic betting man where cricket was concerned. In July of 1735 he got together a team on which he bet the Earl of Middlesex £1000. Eight of the royal representatives were drawn from the London Club, and three were Middlesex cricketers, while the Earl's side was composed entirely of Kentish men. The match was played at Molesey, Surrey, and at one point the play was so much in favour of the Prince's side that odds of 10 to 3 were laid upon it. Nevertheless, the Prince lost his money.

It was agreed that a second match under the same conditions and for the same stakes should be played on Brompton Common. There was great excitement on this occasion, people betting in their thousands on the result. Three people were trampled to death and many riders were knocked off their horses. The Prince's side again lost to

THE DAYS OF CRICKET WAGERING

London and Middlesex, by ten wickets.

Undaunted, the Prince decided to see what skill he could display himself, and a few weeks later he played in Kensington Gardens. Then a match was arranged, with a large sum of money at stake, in which he, with ten friends, pitted himself against the Duke of Marlborough and ten other noblemen. Play was at Kew, and the Prince won.

On another occasion he was playing in Kew Gardens with a party which included Lord Herbert and two sons of the Bishop of Chester. An argument started between two of the players, who began to call each other liar.

The Prince ordered the play to be stopped and told the offenders to follow him to his palace. He took them into a small room, slipped outside himself and locked the door behind him, informing the men from the other side that they were fit company only for one another, and that there they would remain for the next hour—which they did.

It is a fine testimony to the game of cricket that from a childhood and youth in which it was so closely associated with gambling it grew up to its present greatness, completely throwing off the betting influence and developing into one of the purest of all sports.

Testament

(From the Russian of Lermontov, 1814-1841)

*Auld freend, I'd like a word wi' ye,
Juist you and me alane.
They tell me I maun tak' the gait
And you'll be winnin' hame.
See here then—och! but what's the odds
Gin I should live or dee?
There's nane ava'll care a dock
For what becomes o' me.*

*But, still and on, they'll maybe speir,
And, gin they waste their breath,
Tell them a bullet in my wame
Brocht me a daicent death.
The doctors—fegs! A feckless lot—
My hurt they couldna heal.
E'en maun I tak' my leave o' things
And wish my hame fareweel.*

*My faither and my mither baith,
I sair misdoot are gane.
It's juist as weel; wae wad I be
Tae gi'e them ony pain.
But tell them, gin they're still aboot,
At writin' I was slack,
And, noo they've sent us ower the faem,
I'll no' be comin' back.*

*There was a neebor-lass, ye'll mind;
We're pairted mony a year,
So she'll no ask about me—na,
She winna, never fear.
But, tell her a' the same, tell a',
Her toom hert dinna spare.
She'll maybe greet a wee, but, och!
She winna really care.*

T. L. HOWIE.

All About Whitsuntide

MADELAINE PARIS

IN the annual round of festive days, Whitsuntide holds a strangely paradoxical position. From the Christian point of view, the day's association with the Holy Ghost should take precedence over Christmas and Easter, for in it lies the fulfilment of our Saviour's greatest promise. Despite this, Whitsun has always been of less importance for the average Christian than either of the other solemn occasions. But the greater paradox from the folklorist's point of view is that the ancient habits of observing this feast had no relation whatsoever with the spiritual contents of the occasion.

Christmas and Easter were easily conveyed to popular imagination, but the abstract and highly theological meaning of Pentecost was not so apt for his purpose. And so, for many centuries, before fading into a mere long week-end with a Bank Holiday, Whitsuntide retained its original character of Summer festival, a gay celebration of the year's most glorious and abundant season.

In this, it was closely related to the May Day festivities. Here and there, the usual churchgoing was solemnified by the appearance of a wooden pigeon above the altar or by the pews being decorated with the branches of the birch-tree. But even these sprigs and twigs alluded to the full glory of summer gardens and forests.

OUR ancestors took part wholeheartedly in the rejoicing. The Whitsun Ale united every community, great or small. Like the love-feasts of the first Christians, this kind of 'agape' was organised by the raising of common funds. According to Carew's *Survey of Cornwall* (1602), 'Two young men of the parish are yerely chosen by their last foregoers to be wardens, who, dividing the task, make collection among the

parishioners of whatsoever provision it pleaseth them voluntarily to bestow. This they employ in brewing, baking, and other acates, against Whitsontide, upon which holydays the neighbours meet at the church-house, and there merily feed on their owne victuals, contributing some petty portion to the stock, which, by many smalls, groweth to a meetly greatness.'

This 'meetly greatness' was also devised to provide the parish orphans and the poor with material assistance; sometimes it was used for church repairs too. On the other hand, the convivial atmosphere tended to reconcile old enemies, and so Whitsuntide usually brought along the friendly termination of many a bitter feud.

However, apart from these pious and beneficial results, the 'maulte being made into very strong bere and sette to sale' often led to noisy and wild entertainments and, subsequently, to the disapproval of church authorities. Stubbs, in his grave *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), describes scornfully the church ales held 'in certaine townes, where dronken Bacchus beares swaie.' And even as late as 1736, a letter from a minister to his parishioners, written in the deanery of Stow, Gloucestershire, denounces the accompanying entertainment as sports that are 'attended usually with ludicrous gestures, and acts of foolery and buffoonery—but children's play, and what therefore grown-up persons should be ashamed of.'

Still, the common people did not give up their amusements easily, and the strict ritual of fun-making was observed annually on the village greens. The English Whitsun celebrations were presided over by the Lord and Lady of the Ale, who ruled the merrymaking in their best clothes and with much dignity. A large barn or any other spacious building was transformed into the Lord's Hall, where

ALL ABOUT WHITSUNTIDE

he and his lady were surrounded with the members of their special Court—the steward, the sword-bearer, the purse-bearer, the mace-bearer, the train-bearer, and the jester. The mace was a dainty plaything of plaited silk, crowned with ribbons and filled with spices and perfumes.

Sir Philip Sidney draws a charming little portrait of Whitsun's monarch:

*Strephon, with leavy twigs of laurell tree,
A garlant made, on temples for to weare,
For he then chosen was the dignitie
Of village lord that Whitsuntide to beare.*

The same idea of a short mock-rule is to be encountered in Hungarian folklore. Even nowadays, white-clad village girls go round to every house, the youngest and prettiest of them being the 'Whitsun Queen.' They recite appropriate songs and collect small gifts in exchange for their good wishes. The youths elect a Whitsun King too, commonly the best rider and all-round village champion receiving this title. The widely used Hungarian idiom of 'enjoying a Whitsuntide kingdom' indicates a sudden rise to power which always ends abruptly, and often unpleasantly, too.

The habit of electing short-term monarchs, endowing them with temporary power and splendour, clearly hints at the ancient belief that summer was brought to the earth by the benevolent goddess Ceres, mother of fertility. This becomes obvious in the above-mentioned Hungarian 'Whitsun-going,' where the small Queen holds a blossoming branch in her hand and wishes to every householder 'Wine, wheat, and fruit, fine cakes for the old women and flasks of wine for the old men.'

THE gay pomp of the English Whitsun Ale gave an excellent background to the day's chief attraction, the morris dancers. Now mostly sunken into oblivion, once this dancing had almost been identical with the English summer. Many a scholar has tried to analyse this unique synthesis of British and foreign, Christian and pagan, elements. Dr Johnson stated that the morris dance, in which bells are jingled, or staves and swords clashed, was learned from the Moors, and was probably a kind of pyrrhic, or military dance. On the other hand, Blount says: 'Morisco, a Moor; also a dance, so called, wherein there were usually five men, and a boy dressed in a girl's habit, whom they called the Maid Marrion, or

perhaps Morian, from the Italian Morione, a head-piece, because her head was wont to be gaily trimmed up.' Douce thinks that 'The Morris-dance was first brought into England in the time of Edward III., when John of Gaunt returned from Spain, but it is much more probable that we had it from our Gallic neighbours, or even from the Flemings. Few, if any, vestiges of it can be traced beyond the time of Henry VII.'

Whatever its origin, the morris dance contained the best characteristics of the medieval pageant and the popular 'ballet.' Its vivid colours and richness are preserved in various old accounts. The Churchwardens' and Chamberlains' Books of Kingston-on-Thames mention 'menstorels, bellys, bannars, arouys.' It informs us that the lady, i.e. Maid Marian, and the 'Mores' were dressed in satin, fustian, gilt leather, and silver paper, all sprinkled with 'orseden' (tinsel), while little bells kept tinkling on their girdles. We even learn that once a hat was lost in the general excitement, costing the parish tenpence. This, of course, means more than it does in modern currency, otherwise it would seem rather hard that Maid Marian received two shillings only 'for her labour for two years!'

Reading the minute details of these old accounts, one cannot help imagining the picturesque scene of long ago, so often repeated between May Day and Whitsuntide. Maid Marian, not quite distinct from the May Queen, was, together with Robin Hood, the most popular member of the cast. And no wonder, for she wore a golden crown and held a red carnation in her left hand, symbolising young Summertime. The Fool, 'the bauble in his hand, and a coxcomb hood, with asses' ears, on his head,' came down to the group from remote antiquity, representing a coarse humour and vulgarity, while Friar Tuck, Robin Hood's inseparable follower, amused the spectators with mock humility and a rather awkward behaviour. And how could we forget the Hobby-Horse, that splendid cardboard creature, all purple and gold, with a beribboned ladle in his mouth to receive the public's presents! According to an old ballad, the other dancers were called Little John, Will Scarlet, and Stokesley, all being the traditional companions of Robin Hood. The musical accompaniment was provided by Tom the Piper.

It is remarkable that this rather exhausting

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

and noisy entertainment was by no means restricted to the younger generation. In his *Miscellanea* (1680-1701), Sir William Temple mentions a set of morris dancers, composed of ten men, whose ages made up 1200 years. 'Tis not so much that so many in one county should live to that age, as that they should be in vigour and humour to travel and dance,' remarks Dr Grey, quoting the noble Sir William's interesting statement.

In spite of its great antiquity, the morris dance is still alive in this country, although, naturally, not in its original form. Oxford University's morris dancers and those of the Oxford City Police still present open-air performances in groups of eight, usually led by a violinist; and England's oldest morris group, in Bampton, Oxfordshire, used to revive the ancient habit on Whitmondays, showing great skill in the highly complicated handkerchief- and pipe-dances.

EVEN before the morris dance attained its wide popularity, Whitsuntide did not lack the special treat of some kind of stage production. As long ago as the 12th century, the clergy were arranging Whitsun plays for the education and entertainment of the faithful. The famous Chester plays, twenty-five in all, were regularly performed from 1300 to 1600. They all dealt with religious subjects and, following the medieval institution of various trade guilds, the Bible story was divided between the representatives of all respectable occupations. The Drapers were charged with the task of performing the Creation. The Fall of Satan was for some unknown reason allotted to the Tanners. The Water Carriers, suitably enough, were given the Flood. Each group used a high cart for a stage, so that the plays could be produced in several parts of the city. We are lucky enough to know how cheap it was in those good old days to reproduce great cosmic events. The 'Setting the world of fire' cost fourpence only, and the 'Keeping of fire at hell mothe' did not exceed this sum either.

To contrast this mild Hell with the Paradise of happy marriage, let us mention the Dunmow Flitch ceremony of Whitmonday, which was first arranged by Robert Fitzwalter in the

13th century in Dunmow, Essex. A free flitch of bacon was offered to any man who had not repented of his marriage, sleeping or waking, for a year and a day. Due to the secondary position of women in those times, up to the 18th century husbands alone could express their opinion on marriage in this profitable way. Later on, both members of the partnership had to submit a joint claim for the flitch, kneeling on two sharp stones in the churchyard to take oath before the prior and the townsfolk. After this, they were carried through the town in a 13th-century chair, presumably to give publicity to happy married life.

Out of a number of curious superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, two are well worth mentioning. According to one old saying: 'Whatsoever one did ask of God upon Whitsunday morning, at the instant when the sun arose and play'd, God would grant it him.' On the other hand, people believed that 'a child born on Whitsunday is doomed either to kill or be killed. This fate can be averted by going through a ceremony of a mock funeral of the child.'

The old rituals and games did not vanish all of a sudden. They gradually became modified, and survived until the end of the 19th century in the form of social gatherings, pageants, sports, fairs, and horse parades. The famous Whitsun Club Walks, for instance, took the members of various clubs to their local church with great ceremonial, carrying banners, wearing coloured sashes and beribboned top-hats with gay rosettes.

The various amusements became more and more like those of any other fun-fair organised on many occasions other than Whitsun. Not that this diminished their gaiety. Cockfighting, wrestling, boxing, football, and climbing the greasy pole for legs of mutton always attracted popular attention, and the holidays were spent under the auspices of cheesecakes, baked custards, gooseberry puddings, and bottled ale.

Alas, little of all this has been left over for us to-day. 'Antique proverbes, drawn from Whitsun lords, and their authorities at wakes and ales, with country precedents and old wives' tales' belong irrevocably to a day that is gone.

Light Ship Passage

J. E. TAYLOR

SHE was an old tramp-ship, and she was fighting for her life. Deep in the gloom to starboard lay the menace of rocky shores. To seaward, spume tops flickered in a darkling world. Over all, the wind shrilled its song of hatred. Perhaps for the watchers on shore the wind sang a different song—of fury, maybe, and majestic power; but there on board the struggling ship the only theme was hatred. The wind was the voice of the sea, and the sea appeared determined to put an end to the old ship.

'Go aft and see how they're getting on.' The captain's voice was clear and unhurried in my ear. In the oilskins which covered his normal scarecrow appearance he had gained stature. The irascibility, the eccentric ways, were gone. He and his ancient battered ship were one in this struggle to survive.

I scrambled down ladders to the wind- and sea-swept deck. In the port alleyway, alongside the engine-room, a sea rushed into the confined space, boiled over the tops of my sea-boots, and cunningly endeavoured to carry me off my feet. I clung to the handrail and hauled myself aft.

The half-door of the galley was open. I clutched at its edge for support, looking into the lighted interior, into a small world isolated from the storm, where the old cook was furiously attacking cockroaches with boiling water. He scooped water from a boiler and sloshed it behind the steam-pipes where the cockroaches clustered thickly. He swore each time he did it, and the falling water landed on the hot stove sending up great clouds of steam.

'Five years, cookie,' said a voice, 'five years in this old tub and you wait till she looks like going ashore before you have a go at them!' The cook hurled more water behind the pipes and cursed viciously, as

though he was releasing the pent-up hatred of years.

There were some half-dozen men in the galley. They had brought their life-jackets with them, out from the stowage place in the fo'c'sle where normally they lay forgotten throughout the voyage. They had placed them on the locker-top and appeared to ignore their presence with a studied air. The cook swore again. I released my grip upon the door. The deck tipped abruptly away from me and I ran aft with a rush.

The wind pounced across the open deck. 'The sea didn't knock you down in the alleyway, but I can,' it seemed to say. Only the high hatch-coaming saved me. I reeled against it, fought back, and staggered towards the small ladder-hatch.

DOWN below in the 'tween-deck there was calm. But there was also a strange sound to be heard there. It came from the open main-hold. Water. Splashing and lapping. A cluster of electric-bulbs set in their stained, white bowl hung over the main-hold. Their light shone on the black surface of water in motion below. At each lurch and pitch of the ship the water piled heavily against bulkhead or tunnel side. There was no room for it to gather momentum or fury, so it mounted with a sullen heave against the retaining bulkhead, fell back, and rolled against another.

Mr Hawkins's great body moved into the light.

'The Old Man wants to know how it's going,' I said.

'Number Five is flooded. Number Four will take about another foot.' The first mate's voice was flat, toneless, without emotion—nothing to indicate that he was

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

reporting desperate measure. Then it broke suddenly. 'Blast all shipowners!' he cried.

The ship was making a coastwise passage in light ship condition. There was only the water in her double-bottom tanks to give her a grip. There was no solid ballast on board, and, with her high sides presenting to the wind the qualities of a balloon, she was victim to the hatreds that raged outside. This was why the captain gave orders to flood the after-holds. Perhaps the additional weight would give the propeller just enough grip on the water. Perhaps. The ship's old engine turned sturdily enough, but the screw was barely half-submerged.

Even then we dared not flood above the level of the tunnel enclosing the propeller shaft. This formed a dividing bulkhead, keeping the water in equal proportions on either side of the ship. A freely-moving surface of water would rush all to one side of the ship when she rolled. Possibly from one such roll she would not recover.

'Is she holding her own?' asked the mate.

'Not yet.'

Mr Hawkins's great frame swayed backwards and forwards to each toss of the ship, and the shadows thrown by the cluster of electric-bulbs swayed in time with him. Yet he seemed still—still with the effort to keep himself in hand. Big, slow-moving, slow-thinking and unimaginative as a general rule, he was at that moment profoundly stirred. 'If,' he cried suddenly, 'if she can't make it, she might strike within a few yards of my home!'

Then he turned abruptly away, and the voice of the little chief-engineer called from above: 'How much more will you be wanting?'

'Give her another ten minutes, chief, then we'll see.'

The chief's face hung suspended within the reflected light that reached upwards through the ladder-hatchway. It was incongruously crowned by an oilskin sou'wester which seemed no part of a chief-engineer's wear. His face looked almost paternal in the light, and his soft Welsh voice gave no indication of concern. There were ugly things knocking at my heart, and, as if he could see right through to them, he reached out and patted me on the back when I climbed up to him. 'She'll make it, lad,' he said, 'she'll make it.'

Would she? This question filled every thought that passed through the minds of

those upon the bridge during the next hour. Would she?

A ROCKET upon the headland to leeward soared upwards. It went up—up with a rush, then appeared to hang lazily in the wind-swept night, a stream of fire and white stars bursting. Would she? On shore it looked as though they thought she would not. Yet it was comforting to know that there, upon the safety of the land, they were watching and waiting to give such assistance as was in their power.

The captain was silent—and very still. Long ago he had given all the orders he could, and the man at the wheel, his intent face hanging over the light thrown back from the compass-bowl, could do no more.

Nevertheless, for all his silent immobility, the captain radiated power, the power of a will that seemed to give all of its great strength to the beating heart of his old ship. This did not appear to be the man whose manners and speech were rough and crude, betokening the hard course he had cleaved for himself from fo'c'sle to command.

Ahead, upon the starboard bow, the jutting outline of the land could be seen and, between plunging bow and that dark outline, a lightening of the darkness. It was on this lighter area that our hope of life depended. For there, was the open sea. There, was sea-room, and if the ship could round the point of land, she would be safe. Steadily, relentlessly, the gap decreased.

Mr Hawkins was on the bridge now. The second mate also. We stood there—captain, three mates, and one able-seaman holding the wheel hard over—and waited to see who would win. Ship or sea.

The wind came in a triumphant shriek of power, blasted the ship with its roaring strength, and passed onwards. The vessel reeled beneath that onslaught, and the captain's knuckles gleamed white as his hands gripped the rail. Then the craft staggered back, and in the comparative lull which followed the blast her bow crept up, up, by almost imperceptible degrees, into the wind and away from the shore.

'Good girl,' muttered the captain, 'good old girl.'

Recognisable in his voice was the inner love all true seamen feel, in lesser or greater degree, for the ship in which they serve.

LIGHT SHIP PASSAGE

Old and battered though she may be, gaunt and unlovely of appearance, uncomfortable of accommodation and miserly in reward, she is home, and a protection against the vicious elements which attack those who venture afloat.

'Good girl,' repeated the captain, 'good old girl.'

Up and down, up and down, lurching, staggering before each blast, the ship laboured on, striving continually to point a little farther away from the land. And this she did each time the wind allowed it, for the wind came now in furious gusts, each a giant open-handed buffet, followed by a brief lull. We waited for each of these, bodies bent to the gale, praying that they would not prove too great, then watching for the recovery. To the credit side of all our hopes was marked each degree upon the compass-card crossed by the seaward swing of the lubber's-line.

UNDER the strain of waiting, Mr Hawkins began to move restlessly upon the swaying bridge. He growled to himself. Once, when he passed close, he thrust his big round face close to mine and burst out: 'Over there—just off the starboard bow—that's where I learned to sail a boat. Twelve-footer she was.'

He was back again a few moments later. 'Always messing about in that boat I was, like a damn fool. Wouldn't be here to-night if I hadn't. Fool of the family—that's me.'

A sudden blast of fury cut off anything else he might have said, but he was back again later, as though he must chew always the cud of his foolishness. 'My brother—he had more sense. Nice quiet job in an office he's got. Nine till five, and every week-end his own.' He was gone once more, but only a few moments after the wind carried the burden of his plaint yet again. 'Fool of the family—that's me.' It was merely a relief-valve for inward stress. 'Fool of the family.' The cry of a million seamen down the ages who put to sea, cursing for ever their foolishness, yet going back again—and again.

The captain remained still, and we heard no more than his brief, vehement: 'Good girl, good old girl.' A sense of his strength and power was strong upon the bridge, submerging all memory of a loose-fleshed body on which hung scarecrow garments, of crudities of expression and sudden coarse

expletives gathered in fo'c'sles and taverns and bawdy-houses between Tiger Bay and the Yoshiwara. These were gone. He was rock and, on that black night of trial, strongly comforting in his rock-like calm. One could love him for his strength. Clerks in offices ashore spoke slightly of him behind his back, for on shore he made no attempt to uphold the dignity of his position, took rather a perverse pride in crudities of speech and behaviour. But those clerks never stood upon a ship's bridge on such a night when only the unexpressed strength of this man sustained you against the black and ugly things which knocked at your heart.

There came a moment when the fury of the sea breaking among the rocks rose above the wind-whistle in shrouds, and stays, and guys. We were as close as that. All moments of stress leave in memory some sight, or sound, or scent, which remains for ever locked up with that memory. In my memory of that night rings always the wild surge of seas among the sharp-edged rocks. It was fear-inspiring because it was vicious, terror-inspiring because it indicated that it knew no mercy.

All but the engine-room and stokehold watch were on deck, and each man had donned his life-jacket—pathetic gesture of hope. The captain turned to Mr Hawkins. 'Another five minutes,' he said, 'and it'll be settled one way or the other.' He knew that he could do no more. In five minutes' time the ship would have won clear of the point of land, or she would have struck. One or the other. No compromise. No half-chance. If she struck she was doomed, and perhaps each man on board her.

Lights flickered on the crest of the cliff above. They would have the breeches-buoy and line-throwing apparatus ready, and with these make the attempt to save life. But the ship would be doomed.

'Another five minutes and it'll be settled one way or the other.'

THEY told me afterwards that the old cook continued to attack the cockroaches which for so many years had remained in undisturbed possession. All through those five minutes he continued to curse and attack, scalding, swearing in the steam-filled galley, while Maddy, the little cockney fireman, hung over the galley door and laughed at him.

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

So they occupied themselves, while death came close—the cook in furious assault upon insects which for years he had accepted as a part of life, and little Maddy in laughter at his efforts.

And on the bridge the minutes ticked by. So closely were our ears tuned to the sound of the old engine that we heard its beating penetrating through all other sounds. If it faltered now, then the end was certain. Heart-beat and engine-beat, both meant life. The illuminated face of the man at the wheel took on a look of intense strain as he watched the swaying compass-card.

There was a sudden upsurge of sound—of waters beating upon a rock that stood out lone, and black, and streaming. Then this slipped by and aft among its own maelstrom. To starboard the land fell away.

We were clear, and there was sea-room—blessed sea-room. Someone on deck raised a cheer, a thin sound caught and torn to shreds by the wind. Others echoed it and, thin though it was, it was a sound of human hope, and courage, and defiance, and joy among all the fury. Perhaps others cheered up on the headland as they leaned with the weight of their bodies against the weight of wind and saw the dark outline of the ship below them pass to safety.

The captain relaxed his immobility at last. He shuffled flat-footed to the compass and back. 'Remind me,' he said, 'next time the owners order me coastwise in winter on a light ship passage to tell 'em to go to hell.' That, at any rate, is the gist of what he said. The expression he actually used was crude, but highly picturesque.

When Scolds were Gagged

MICHAEL LINDSEY

IN the days when men were men and women could be muzzled for nagging, it was not unusual for a woman to be led through the streets and chained to the market-cross. Our forefathers did not stop at half-measures. Punishment for even petty crimes was severe. While a man was hung for stealing a sheep, or put in the stocks for brawling, a woman could be gagged and bridled for swearing, nagging, or idly prattling.

Our forebears did not hesitate to apply the cure remorselessly, for they regarded a shrewish woman as suffering from an ailment of the tongue which caused it to wag so furiously. A wagging tongue must be stopped, and the offender taught a lesson. Such a dangerous affliction demanded a desperate remedy. Their answer was to subject any such offender to a most humiliating and painful contraption which served as

a most effective, if inhuman, method of correction.

This was a form of bridle, known as the scold's bridle, the gossip's bridle, or the branks. It was also named the dames' bridle and the scold's helm in some areas. One ancient authority calls it 'a Brydle for a curste queane.' It was an iron framework, or skeleton helmet, which was fitted over the head of the gossip and locked. It had a gag which pressed on to the lips, and a metal plate or bit which was pushed into the mouth and forced down the tongue. The metal plate was sometimes so arranged as to wound the tongue if the wearer attempted to speak. In most cases, however, it was not purposely designed to lacerate the mouth, but merely to restrain the tongue.

A chain was attached to the bridle, and the unfortunate woman was led through the streets

WHEN SCOLDS WERE GAGGED

by an officer, to be ridiculed and buffeted by the townsfolk. She was then either placed in the stocks or chained to the pillory, whipping-post, or the market-cross for several hours, to be the butt of the local hooligans.

An onlooker who saw such a branking, or bridling, at Newcastle-under-Lyme declared that it was very effectual and much to be preferred to 'the cucking stoole, which not only endangers the health of the party, but also gives the tongue liberty 'twixt every dipp.' The branks not only deprived the victim of speech, but also was not removed 'till after the party begins to show all external signes imaginable of humiliation and amendment.' The bridle was sometimes worn in conjunction with the ducking-stool.

The early, simplest, form of bridle was a hoop of iron with hinges at the side and a mouthpiece. Later, it became more ornate and terrifying, with the addition of hoops and bands. To increase the humiliation of the occasion, some bridles were made grotesque and clownish. They were fashioned in the form of rude masks to cover the whole of the face, with eye-holes and nose-pieces. Some of them were so elaborately designed with their eerie skull-like faces that the wearers had the appearance of diabolical fiends with lantern-shaped heads. One used in Lincolnshire had a long conical piece of metal, like a sharp snout with many holes in it, protruding from the front of the mouth, presumably to indicate the length, sharpness, and foolishness of the wearer's tongue.

BRANKS were in popular use in Scotland many years before they were introduced into England. The name 'brank' comes from the Scottish word for bridle or halter. The simplest kind of branks in construction and shape is to be found there. It has not been ascertained when the instrument was first employed, but its existence was known in Edinburgh in 1567, in Glasgow in 1574, and in Stirling in 1600. The kirk-session records of Stirling refer to the 'brankes' as a means of punishing a shrewish woman. Burns also refers in one of his poems to the use of the contrivance.

There is an interesting story touching the 'Bishop's Brank' of St Andrews. It is related that a woman stood up in the church during a service at which an archbishop was preaching. She accused him of an illicit

affair with her in his student days. She was arrested and brought before the kirk-session. Her sentence decreed that she must 'appear for a succession of Sundays on the repentance stool, wearing a brank.'

A visitor to the Isle of Man indicated the use of a very early form of branks when he described the tongue of a scandalous person being tied with a noose of leather, called a bridle.

This method of punishment was widely practised in England during the 16th and 17th centuries, to silence foolish tongues. Although its use was never legal, the bridling of scolds was frequently indulged with the full approval of the local authorities. Lords of the manor and corporations reserved the right to inflict such punishment.

The use of the bridle was known in Macclesfield in 1623, in Chesterfield in 1688. In the town accounts for Newcastle-upon-Tyne is an item associated with this custom: 'Paide for caring a woman through the towne for skaulding with branks, 4d.' Apparently quite cheap at the price! In 1648 the Corporation of Bridgnorth paid 'to John Broadfield, the smith, for an iron bridle which the bailiffs caused to be made for scoldes, 1.6d.' A bridle was presented to Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, by a man named Chester, who is reputed to have missed a small fortune through a woman's idle prattle. It is dated 1633, and bears the inscription:

*Chester presents Walton with a Bridle
To curb women's tongues that talk too idle.*

Another, slightly different, kind of bridle was designed to cover the eyes so that the victim could not see who the people were who trounced and jibed her. It also had the effect of making the wearer even more helpless and confused, stumbling along behind the chain unseen.

At Congleton, Cheshire, it was customary for a man to send for the local jailer if his wife began to rail and scold. The jailer brought a bridle, which was placed over her head. She was then chained to a strong metal hook attached to the side of the large open fireplace. The woman was not freed until she promised to be more amenable and obedient in the future. A man could thus deal with his wife without making a public exhibition of her. This method, however, was rare.

At Altrincham, Cheshire, in 1820, a woman who had caused much trouble to her neigh-

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

bours was condemned to walk through the town wearing a bridle. When the bridle was put on, she refused to budge, so she was taken through the streets in a wheelbarrow! The punishment is reputed to have been most effective.

MOST bridles must have been exceedingly painful to wear, even in the mildest cases when bridling a scold was, for the onlookers at least, a time of merriment. A spectator at Newcastle-upon-Tyne declared that the magistrates in enforcing the sentence had done it with such severity that the mouth of the prisoner was flowing with blood.

One particular type of branks was shaped specially to cause as little pain as possible. The mouthpiece was rounded and curled over at the end to prevent injury to the mouth, yet the most humane approach could not preclude hurt and intense suffering. Some bridles, indeed, were purposely designed to be hideously cruel. Instead of the usual flat mouth-plate, a sharp knife, barbed spike, or even a three-pointed spur, was inserted. Therefore, the slightest pull on the chain or movement of the mouth would lacerate the tongue and seriously damage the mouth. In such cases an unpleasant and painful custom became a dreadful and quite barbarous practice.

Although this particular form of punish-

ment was supposed to be reserved for witches, many ordinary innocent women, whose only crime was a tendency to scold or gossip, were cruelly and shamefully treated. A witches' bridle of this kind was used in Forfar in 1661, and a similar one was preserved at Stockport, Cheshire. It contained a tongue-plate about two inches long, at the end of which was a ball that bristled with sharp iron pins shaped like thorns, with deadly searing edges. The Forfar bridle had a movable hoop, so that the least pressure on the chain would thrust the knife or spur deeper into the victim's mouth.

It is when we discover such facts as these that we realise that the 'good old days' were not quite so good as they have been represented, nor were men so gallant as the romantics claim. It is not surprising that William Beaumont, an authority on the branks, declared: 'One can hardly conceive a punishment more degrading or less calculated to refine the spectators.' While we boast that we live in an enlightened age, it is a shock to discover that we have not left such inhuman activities so far behind. The last reputed application of the branks was at Congleton, in 1824, while other authorities state that it was used up to as recently as 1856 for cases of immorality. Silence may be golden, but no civilised man would wish to go back to such barbarities and make it painful too.

Song of the Birds

*While sparrows and the speckled thrush
All hunt for worms to break their fast,
The singing lark soars higher yet,
Proclaiming that the night is past.
When almost lost against the sky,
He hovers there on tiny wing,
So full of life, with pulsing throat
Bursting to sing, and sing, and sing.*

*At dusk, the noisy sparrows hushed,
Expectant stillness falls at last.
The air is sweet, the evening dew
Descends to bless the day now past.
A purple cloak o'er distant hills,
A lonely star to grace the sky,
Then softly, from the nightingale,
The birds' own lovely lullaby.*

E. HAYES.

Over the Sea to Skye

NEIL MATHESON

WHEN the Scottish Tourist Board announced their intention of sponsoring a 'Skye Week' to be held in May 1950, little eddies of excitement were set in motion in many parts of the British Empire. For the Skyeman is far-travelled and, like St Patrick, when he dreams, it is always about the Isle of the Gael—in this case *Eilean a Cheo*, the Misty Isle.

And here was an occasion indeed, an occasion when clansmen from the ends of the earth—MacLeods, MacDonalds, MacKinnons, and others forby—would be taking the nearest road to the Isles for perhaps the greatest forgathering in Skye's history—a week of ceilidhs and dancing; of sightseeing and merrymaking; but of homage and remembrance too.

It is a strange thing this passion of the Gael for the old homeland. Is it the heather, I wonder, or the tartan, or the nostalgic tang of peat-reek that weaves the spell? Maybe it's the crooning of Hebridean seas, the songs of the ceilidh, or just the old, old urge of the blood. Or perhaps a blend of them all, and something more besides. Whatever it is, it is very real.

SKYE has been endowed by nature with a great wealth of physical charm and beauty, and year after year thousands of visitors are lured to her shores by the sheer magic of her name. The Coolins alone would give pre-eminence to any island. But there is more to it than that, for the charm of Skye lies not only in her physical beauty, but in the romance and poetry of a past that is for ever intruding into the present through the colourful old tales still told round the peat-fires.

One of the old legends goes so far as to suggest that Skye was the actual Tir nan Og

—the Land of the Ever-Young, or Celtic paradise. But not even the most ardent Skyeman would claim as much as that.

If, however, we cannot claim Skye as the Tir nan Og of the ancients, there is good reason for believing it to have been one of the favourite haunts of Cuchullin, mightiest of all the heroes of Gaelic mythology. Thus all the old legends agree that it was at Dun Sgathach, in Sleat, that Cuchullin learned the arts of war from Queen Sgathach, the most famous warrior of her time; and close to the ruins of the 'dun' you can still see the stone to which the hero is said to have tied his pet hound.

And there was Fingal too—Fionn they call him in the Gaelic—another of the great legendary figures who, through the peat-fire tales, was better known to the crofters of the islands half-a-century ago than the great Rory Mor of Dunvegan or Donald Gorm Mor of Duntulm, and they two of the most distinguished Skye chiefs who ever put on tartan. Well, Fionn used to come to Skye, and one of his favourite vantage-points was on the top of Creag Sniosdal at the north end of the island, where, from Suidhe Fhinn ('Fingal's Seat'), he would watch the Minch for the coming of the Norsemen.

The Norsemen did come in their own time, and a sorry day it was for Skye that Fionn was not there to meet them, for not only did they take possession of the island, but they brought an alien tongue and strange ways with them. And it was from that time that the Hebrides became known to the Gaels as *Innse Gall*, 'the islands of the strangers.'

For several centuries the tongue of the stranger was the principal language of the Hebrides, a fact which is reflected in the overwhelming preponderance of Norse place-names as compared with those of Celtic origin. The Gaelic language, too, is im-

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

pregnated with words of Norse origin, and many Gaelic speakers would no doubt be surprised to hear that *tapadh* in the expression 'thank you' is Norse, as are also *bata*, a boat, *birlinn*, a galley, *brog*, a shoe, *uinneag*, a window, and dozens of other words used in everyday conversation. Norse, as well, are many of the clan names like MacLeod, MacAulay, MacAskell, and MacCrimmon, to quote but a few of the better known.

AMONG the greatest of the Skye clans were the MacLeods, and proud they were of their Norse descent. No maid could be chosen to nurse the heir at Dunvegan unless she could sing the Banshee's Lullaby, a lullaby which emphasises that the child is not of Clan Kenneth or Clan Donald but of 'Leod of the swords and coats of mail,' whose father's native land was Lochlann (Scandinavia).

Seven hundred years have passed since Leod laid the foundation of the ancestral home of the MacLeods at Dunvegan, where Flora, Mrs MacLeod of MacLeod, 28th Chief in direct descent from Leod, still carries on the great tradition of her clan. Here, indeed, is a fitting spot for the big 'MacLeod Rally' that is to be held during the 'Skye Week.'

Dunvegan is history, and, if its walls could speak, it's many a stirring tale they could tell of gallant clansmen and their fair ladies, of bards and minstrels, and of the unbounded hospitality that earned for Dunvegan the proud title of *Dun Flathail nan Cuach*, 'Dunvegan of the Hospitable Cups,' a fine title, indeed, and an honour that would not be denied it by its bitterest enemies.

But there were deeds of shame, too, like the gruesome tale that is told of two daughters of Iain, 4th Chief, who were starved to death in the castle dungeon because their mother disapproved of love affairs they had contracted with two local lads of the name of MacQueen. Yes, there were deeds of shame and no mistake, and none more heinous than that surrounding the fate of a party of Campbells at the hands of Iain Dubh, 12th Chief of MacLeod.

The MacLeods and Campbells were never the best of friends, and, even if they had been, feuds were in the blood in those days. On this particular occasion, however, the two parties resolved to settle their differences

amicably if at all possible. With this object in view they met in the near-by church of Kilmuir, and great was the joy of all concerned when a reconciliation was effected—or so it seemed. To celebrate the occasion, Iain Dubh invited the Campbells to a banquet in Dunvegan Castle, each Campbell being seated between two MacLeods. Outwardly, all appeared to be well, but at a given signal, and just as the feast was about its height, a cup of blood was placed in front of each Campbell. There was no mistaking the sinister significance of this token, and there and then each Campbell was stabbed to the heart, Iain Dubh selecting the leader for himself. But, och, Iain Dubh was a wicked Chief, and not like a MacLeod at all at all.

IT has been said that if the last trumpet had been blown at the end of the French wars no one but a MacLeod would have risen out of the churchyard at Dunvegan, and it is not surprising that that part of Skye should still be colloquially referred to as 'MacLeod's Country.'

But numerous as they were, and brave as they were, the MacLeods could not have preserved their ancient patrimony but for the influence of the Fairy Flag, the tattered remains of which may still be seen in the drawing-room at Dunvegan Castle. How the Fairy Flag came into the possession of the MacLeods is not known. One legend has it that the banner was a gift from the fairy wife of one of the Chiefs. Before returning to join her people in Fairyland, she handed over the flag, investing it with the power of three times succouring the clan in the hour of danger. Twice the banner has been waved, and at its unfolding 'the very blades of grass were changed to armed men.' But it is now so fragile and threadbare that not even the fairies themselves could manage to wave it a third time.

You will find a lot of fairies in the history of Dunvegan, and indeed in all the histories written by seannachies—as all histories of the Gael ought to be!

Wasn't it a fairy that gave Dunvegan the famous lullaby, words and music too? And none less than the Queen of the Fairies herself who gave the famous Silver Chanter to the MacCrimmons, investing them with a skill in piping which has never been equalled. Aye, there's a name for you, more honoured

OVER THE SEA TO SKYE

amongst pipers the world over than MacLeod or MacDonald or any other of the great clan names. So when the 'Skye Week' comes round there will be few shrines in the island that will attract more pilgrims than the cairn at Borreraig which marks the site of the famous MacCrimmon college of piping. To this college came renowned pipers from all over Scotland to learn the finer points of *ceol mor* ('great music'), or pibroch, as it is usually termed, from the great Skye masters who were hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan.

THE history of Skye is largely that of two great clans—MacLeods and MacDonalds. And if the MacLeods can trace their ancestry to 'Leod of the swords and coats of mail,' the MacDonalds can go one better and claim Celtic descent from the illustrious Conn of the Hundred Battles, who, according to Irish sources, flourished in the 2nd century. With a lineage like that behind them the MacDonalds could hardly be blamed for being a little proud.

The story is told of a MacDonald Chief in the reign of Queen Elizabeth who was invited to a banquet given by the Lord Mayor of London. MacDonald was placed at some distance down the table, and when the Lord Mayor's attention was drawn to the matter he directed that MacDonald should be asked to come to the top of the table. 'Tell his Excellency not to trouble,' replied MacDonald, 'because wherever MacDonald sits, that is the top of the table.'

Since 1815 the MacDonalds have made their home at Armadale Castle in the south end of the island, but in the heroic days of the clan 'Duntulm of the High Towers,' in the north of the island, amid policies said to have been consecrated with the soil of seven kingdoms, was their home. Here for two hundred years the MacDonald Chiefs reigned virtually as kings, again and again defying the king of Scotland, and backing their defiance with armies of killed warriors. Now all that remains of the once resplendent home of the Lords of the Isles is a few crumbling gables and isolated stacks of mouldering masonry.

On a summer evening long ago, according to a story still told round the peat-fires of Skye, a nursemaid with a sleeping child in her arms stood on the ramparts of Duntulm

and watched the slow transformation of the hills of Harris under the magic alchemy of the westering sun. Whether it had been startled in its sleep, or was merely reacting to some irresistible impulse, the child suddenly jerked itself free from the nursemaid's grasp, and toppling over the battlements was dashed to death on the rocks below. This may be only a fireside tale, for in the story of Duntulm legend and history are so closely interwoven that no one can tell where the one begins and the other ends. But there is a strong tradition that the incident actually happened and that it had something to do with the decision of the MacDonalds to leave Duntulm for their present home at Armadale.

ONE of the most colourful of the MacDonald Chiefs was Donald Gorm Mor, whose name, along with that of a near kinsman, Uisdean MacGillespic Chleirich, is associated with one of the most gruesome incidents in the history of Duntulm. Uisdean had long entertained designs on the chiefship, and one of his last acts was to conspire with typical perfidy against the life of Donald Gorm.

On a rocky promontory at Cuidreach, some twelve miles south of Duntulm, stands the almost complete shell of Caisteal Uisdean ('Hugh's Castle'), one of the oddest buildings in Skye. The castle is of the peel type, and a curious feature is the absence of windows on the ground-floor, which derives its only lighting from three narrow loopholes sunk into the thickness of the walls. An even more sinister feature is that the only door giving access to the building is situated at a height of over eight feet above ground-level, rendering entrance virtually impossible except by means of a rope-ladder, which was apparently drawn inside the building when not in use.

Uisdean had just completed his grand new house, and by way of celebrating the occasion he had arranged to hold a house-warming, to which the Chief and other prominent members of the clan were to be invited. But there was something more than house-warming in Uisdean's mind; the occasion was to be used primarily for the liquidation of Donald Gorm Mor, and an assassin, Martin by name, had actually been hired to carry out the foul deed. By a strange freak of fortune, however, two letters which Uisdean wrote

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

—one addressed to the Chief and the other addressed to Martin—were by some mistake or other placed in the wrong covers.

Donald Gorm acted swiftly and ruthlessly. Bound hand and foot, Uisdean was brought before him at Duntulm. Thanking him for the arrangements he had made for his entertainment on the night of the house-warming, the Chief informed Uisdean that as a mark of appreciation he would remain a guest at Duntulm for the remainder of his days. Without more ado Uisdean was cast into the castle dungeon. When his eyes had become accustomed to the dusk of the vault, he observed that a meal had been prepared for him. On a plate was a huge chunk of meat, and near by he espied a pewter tankard, so reminiscent of Duntulm hospitality. The meat was unusually salty, but Uisdean was hungry and greedily devoured a large portion of it, and after satisfying his hunger he bent down for the pewter tankard in order to slake a thirst to which the salt meat had given a decided edge. To his horror, however, he found that the tankard was empty, and to add to his despair sounds coming from the outside of his cell appeared to indicate that masons were in the act of blocking up the door of his prison.

His fears were not unfounded. Many years afterwards, when the vault was reopened, workmen discovered the skeleton of a powerfully-built man, whose hands and jaws still clutched the pewter jug, from which chunks had actually been torn in the agony of a maddening thirst. So ended the career of Uisdean, arch-fiend of Clan Donald, whose skull and thigh-bones lay in the window of the near-by Kilmuir church until the year 1827, 'when they were reverently committed to the dust.'

THE deeds of shame, however, are remembered while the cultural background is forgotten. One is reminded of this by the 'Harper's Window,' which may still be seen in one of the castle walls, a witness to the part that music played in Highland life in those times when there was scarcely a chief in the Highlands who did not include in his retinue a bard, a piper, and a harper.

There was little evidence of Jacobite enthusiasm amongst the MacLeods and MacDonalds during the '45, and when 'the lad that was born to be king' spent a few days in Skye, in the summer of 1746, it was as a fugitive, with few friends in the island. But at any rate we cannot forget that he owed much, perhaps his life, to Flora MacDonald, whose grave in the churchyard not far from Duntulm few can pass without a feeling of intense admiration for the courage and fidelity displayed by this Highland heroine of the '45.

These are days when romance is disappearing before the onrush of modernism, when even the Islands are becoming despoiled of their dreams. But when the exiles return to Skye this May, many of the old dreams will be recalled, and many a forgotten shrine will claim its pilgrims.

Up till a few years since—it may still be in existence—a gooseberry-bush grew amongst the ruins of an old clachan in Eastside that was deserted a hundred and fifty years ago when the people emigrated to lands across the sea. There it persisted, like a protestation against the surrounding desolation, but like a confession of faith, too, in what was yet to be. There are many such shrines in Skye, and they, perhaps more than the romance of Dunvegan and Duntulm, will evoke the response that Skye and the Islands are calling for to-day.

The Western Isles

*Green hills, green hills that shut me in,
My dreams fly north beyond your crowns
To where the tumbling tides begin
Their journeying past little towns
And lighted shores, towards a West
Of dim and lovely colourings—
Green hills, green hills, above your crest
My wild dreams fly on homing wings.*

*Across the wrinkled sea they fly,
Along the sunset's path of gold,
Till blue and dim against the sky
Loom little islands ages old,
Around whose shores from year to year
Sea-music follows all the day—
Oh, southern hills that hold me here,
My dreams are drawing me away!*

ELIZABETH FLEMING.

Sallows Mill

JAMES RINNES

I OFTEN wonder whether Tobias Shurd has died again. At times the thought obsesses me, and each year it takes me once more to the stream we knew so well. It leads me to wander along those familiar banks and to pause awhile by the pool of Sallows Mill. It leads me also to an old and peaceful churchyard, almost surrounded by stately elms and sycamores, where a headstone bears his name. It is an unusual memorial—but then he was an unusual man.

In shape a simple oblong, the stone leans a little to one side amid the uncut grass. Patches of moss cling to its rough grey surface, but the inscription, deeply incised, is still clearly legible.

TOBIAS SHURD.
God who afflicted him
Gave him His Peace.
14 Sept. 1909.

Below the lettering is carved in low-relief the crude representation of a seated dog, gazing inwards to where, across the stone, three fishes swim in eternal unison one above the other.

TOBIAS SHURD, by virtue of an affliction, was apart from his fellows. Some might have described him as the village idiot, but that would hardly have been doing him justice. He had, though, been born with a deformation of the palate and, although he could make himself understood, he had never been able to talk with ease; it demanded an effort which he seldom made.

As if such a misfortune were not enough, he had also suffered an accident when quite a small child. Apparently some youngsters were romping by a threshing-machine, and Tobias, a mere toddler, was thrown against

some moving part. He lost his left eye and its lid remained for ever closed over the empty socket, while just below it, pitted deeply into his cheek, was a large three-pointed scar.

When I was a small boy I knew him as an oldish man whose history was uncertain. About his birth there were village tales with the usual somewhat scandalous flavour, but, whatever his origin, he had become a solitary, a creature of the open-air, versed in the ways of the birds and beasts—all the ingredients of the born poacher. There is no doubt that some of his activities lay in that direction, yet he was not a poacher in the ordinary way. In other directions he was so frequently of use to the countryside that toleration had grown up concerning the game which disappeared into his ancient leather-bound haversack. You see, he did not poach for profit, and that made a world of difference.

He poached only for the needs of himself and the good woman with whom he lodged, that is to say when he was not sleeping beneath the stars. The village used to see him chopping wood for the woman and did not of its charity inquire too deeply in what other coin he paid for his food and lodging, where she obtained game for her table, or how her small garden apparently bore such splendid fruit. She had befriended him, and there is a give-and-take in country life which, if I may say so, is much more Christian than much in our modern law-ordered lives.

There was, in fact, no other way in which he could have paid her, for Tobias had never been known to work for money. His terms of service were his own, dictated by his need for freedom—the freedom to be alone. He was never, for instance, seen in the harvest-field, for where there are numbers there is talk, and talk was to be avoided. Certainly

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

it was not work which scared him, but he had his own way of arranging his labours. First, however, let me tell of 'Scrambler.'

TOBIAS was never seen without his dog at his heels. Like his master's, Scrambler's origins were also obscure, but I should say that his family-tree was mainly dachshund with a dash of terrier and pug-dog thrown in; nothing but a pug could have provided his tightly-curved tail. He never jumped, but surmounted any obstacle by scrambling, and the sight of him balanced on his belly across a fallen tree-trunk, with all four legs working furiously to secure a hold, originated the name by which my family always knew him. For Tobias he probably never had a name; it was enough that Scrambler answered implicitly the various low whistles by which his master controlled him.

Tobias would appear at odd moments, with, of course, Scrambler, in front of some farmer and blurt out a few words, of which the peculiar sounds soon came to be known. Sometimes he would say in his deep muffled voice 'B'hoik,' which the initiated knew to mean billhook, or perhaps it would be 'Sois' for a scythe. There was nothing furtive about these requests, which were, in fact, not so much requests as demands, and armed with the tools he required he would disappear as he had come, apparently to nowhere in particular. But no one ever regretted having lent them to him, for they would always be returned as clean and sharp as a craftsman's tools should be. A day later, or perhaps several days, he would reappear and hand them back with the single word 'Boik,' which closed the incident. Somewhere, however, a hedge had been cut and laid, a ditch cleaned, or a gatepost reset. He had an instinct for the jobs which had been neglected, and many and varied they were. He did them all with tidy skill and the care which is devoted to a labour of love.

He met any offer of payment by thrusting his hands vigorously into his pockets and shaking his head. Sometimes he would accept food or drink, but only if it were such that he could take it away to be consumed in solitude at whatever hour his appetite might decree. 'Thoink,' he would say, if he took what was offered, and, stuffing it into his haversack, would add, 'Oi m'n be goi'—'I must be going.' His real wages,

however, were the privilege which all accorded him to wander wherever he chose whenever he chose. He got what he wanted, to be treated just as a part of the landscape.

WHEN Tobias was not at one of the self-appointed labours, he was certain to be found somewhere by the stream, as well I knew, since we shared a passion for fishing. As fishermen, however, we were in rather different categories, he the virtuoso and I the clumsy beginner, and I was wise enough when we met to keep a certain distance and not to attempt conversation. To be honest, I was a little frightened of him. His scarred face and missing eye certainly gave him a most forbidding appearance, but I would find a place on the bank from which, though ostensibly fishing, I could watch as closely as possible the methods of the master.

Often I would find Tobias by Sallows Mill, the ruined remains of a building burnt down in Napoleonic times; little was left to show where once it stood, but you can see the relics to this day. Above them lies the mill-pond, some fifty yards long by about twenty across, and in places quite deep. The stream enters at a leisurely pace, and at the tail of the pool there is a sluice-gate by means of which the flow is controlled. The sluice-gate has always been maintained even though the mill itself has long ceased to be.

Down one side of the pond grew a few willows; there were more in my young days, nine in fact. I knew almost every leaf on them, for many a long hour I spent by Sallows Mill. You see, there were carp in it, fat carp. In my mind's eye I can see them still as they cruised round on a hot day just beneath the surface. There is something rather ludicrously solemn about the progress of big carp, like a procession of well-covered Aldermen making the most of their dignity and pausing frequently, apparently to admire the view, but in fact to regain their breath. I never depleted their ranks, however, until I despaired of ever doing so. Carp live to a great age, and these wily fellows had inspected the bait of many a village lad. As a quarry they were most exasperating. For instance, a carp will blow—if that word can be applied to water as to air—the paste from the hook it is contrived to hide, devour the crumbs, and give the fisherman no more fun than that of renewing his bait.

With my limited skill, I had tried every dodge I knew, all without success, when one day I overheard a remark that carp are best caught by moonlight. I was eleven years old at the time, and the information was exciting. Waiting for a good moon tried my patience sorely, but in due course there arrived a lovely clear night with the moon very nearly full. When all the family had retired to bed, I climbed out of a window and set off for the stream. I might add that I later returned the same way and only a discreet younger brother ever knew of my escapade.

Now, I had learnt the way of climbing a certain large willow-tree which overhung the mill-pond, and ensconced in its branches I could dangle my bait in the water from an excellent vantage-point. When I got there, however, I must confess I was not very happy, not because of my position but because of such shapes and shadows as unnerve the timid in lonely places by night. Small sounds, too, carry far in dead-still air, and even the whirring note of a nightjar can cause strange fancies.

YOU can imagine, then, that my heart stood still when I suddenly noticed a moving figure on my side of the stream. At first it must have been about a hundred yards away, but drew nearer each time I caught a glimpse of it through the branches. My first instinct was to scramble down and run as I had never run before, but as I was about to do so I twice heard the sound of a twig broken underfoot, and ghosts don't walk like that. So I snuggled down in my tree, and waited motionless.

When the figure had arrived opposite the sluice-gate, I saw that it was a man with a dog at his heels. All was explained—Tobias and Scrambler were abroad. But to what purpose? To my mind there was only one answer—he too was after the carp by moonlight, and I relished the prospect of being a spectator of his wiles. His actions, however, were not those of a fisherman. He stopped in full view only some twenty yards away and I could see him quite clearly in the moonlight. He produced an object from his haversack; it was the size of a rabbit, and I thought I saw its white scut. Another followed, and then with both in one hand he went to one of the willow-trees. I could not see what he was doing there, but I knew that willow-tree.

It was hollow, and I had found a hole at its base leading into the interior. It was a small hole and, without wading, you could only put a hand into it by catching hold of an excrescence on the trunk and leaning somewhat precariously out over the water. I remembered daring to do this myself, and had half-expected the hand with which I nervously felt in the hole to be pecked by an owl. It was not, however, an owl, but Tobias who used the tree, as a temporary hiding-place for his gains. I was delighted at discovering one of his secrets.

I was so intent on watching him that I did not also take note of Scrambler, but Scrambler, to his credit, took note of me, or rather of my trail. My attention was caught by snuffling noises as he followed my scent along the bank, right to the foot of the willow in which I sat. He passed it by, but soon came casting back. After a moment or two puzzling round at the base of the trunk, he placed his fore-paws against it and began to whimper. I realised that though I myself might remain concealed from the prying gaze of Tobias, my line and float would not escape his keen eye, which alone was sharper than my two. I could not recover my tackle stealthily, and decided to face the ogre on the ground.

I started to scramble down, and was hanging from a branch by my hands ready to drop, when a growl below my boots changed my mind. I drew them up rather hurriedly, but was quite unable to get back into the tree. So Tobias arrived to find a very disconcerted small boy hanging in mid-air with his heart thumping furiously. The situation evidently tickled him, for he just gave a deep 'Aw—,' and making no effort to call off Scrambler began methodically to fill his pipe.

'I was just fishing,' I said in a voice which did not seem to belong to me, hurriedly adding as I felt my grip giving, 'an' please. I don't want to be bitten.'

A soft whistle took Scrambler to his master's heels as I fell sprawling to the ground. Picking myself up as quickly as I could, I made haste to placate the old man by blurring out, 'Please, I didn't see,' only to realise as I did so that this statement was a certain indication that I had! The significance of it did not escape Tobias, and he savoured it with a sort of smile before producing another deep 'Aw—.' Then, returning his unlit pipe slowly into a pocket, he added in friendly fashion, 'Coitch any?'

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

His sure instinct had told him at once that though a small boy who frequented the river at such peculiar hours might prove a nuisance, if there were tales to tell he might equally prove a nuisance to the small boy. It also told him that such a fishing enthusiast was no enemy but a kindred spirit.

When he had helped me to recover my tackle, he examined my bait, a worm. He shook his head at it and said, 'Noi, noi. Poiss.' The meaning of the last word escaped me, but I had the sense to ask, 'Please will you show me?'

Without a word he opened a tin and held it out for my inspection. It contained peas. Now, one clue to carp-fishing is that you must know the appropriate bait for any particular place. At Sallows Mill it was boiled green peas, and Tobias knew it, just as he knew every other scrap of local lore.

It was thus that I received my first of many a lesson, and from it there grew a friendship which I cannot forget, for Tobias not only taught me how to fish, but also opened my eyes to many of Nature's wonders.

AT the age of fourteen I went to boarding-school, but during each holiday still spent many hours with Tobias. One September day we had been fishing lower down the stream but paused to rest awhile by Sallows Mill. Tobias had aged rather rapidly that year and was now often content to lie on the bank with his rod inactive on the ground beside him. I had noticed, too, that when I brought him the net containing a fish I had just landed he did not administer the *coup de grâce* with the same grunt of satisfaction as of yore. Perhaps age induced in him thoughts of the brevity of life for creatures of the water as of the air. That very day an incident confirmed me in that suspicion.

While we sat in silence looking at the mill-pond, a large carp came slowly into the shallows immediately below us. It seemed to be drifting, rather than swimming, just below the surface, and we could see quite clearly that it was opening and closing its mouth rather rapidly, showing that its breathing was unnatural. In further sign of distress it rolled over, revealing its white belly before righting itself. As it drifted away I turned to see the reaction of Tobias. He was gazing motionless at where he had

last seen the carp, and then very quietly he said: 'Soon doid. Soon doid.'

This melancholy was unusual for him, for, though he never laughed outright, there was nothing solemn in his nature. So to rouse him from his mood I rose to my feet saying: 'Come along, Tobias, or you'll be getting soft.'

As I did so, I saw him lean intently forward peering at the water. I followed his gaze and saw another carp, but a smaller one, performing much the same manoeuvres as the first. It also was in distress.

'That one will soon be a goner too,' I said, but Tobias took no notice. Inclining forward, he watched the gasping fish intently. He seemed fascinated by it. His lower-lip was drooping, and I saw that his own mouth was half-opening and closing. I could not help laughing silently at the sight of him. He looked exactly like a fish himself. 'He's beginning to go a bit in the head,' I thought, but out loud I said: 'Come on home, Tobias. We've seen enough fish for to-day.'

Tobias's normal expression returned to his face, but he shook his head saying, 'Noi thoink. Noi thoink.' For him the effort of a reiteration indicated a certainty, so, without pretending to understand his mood, I left him. I glanced back before I was out of sight, and he was still there, gazing out into the pool. It was the last look I ever had of that afflicted but lovable figure, for it was only a few days later that the spirit of Tobias left his mortal body—in peculiar circumstances.

THOUGH the news filled me with sadness, I had seen Tobias failing, and was not really surprised, but the details of his passing puzzled me greatly. His body had been found in Sallows Mill, by the sluice-gate, whither the flow had taken it. His rod and haversack were found about halfway up the pool, and footprints indicated that he had walked into the water. There was no evidence of any sort to suggest foul play, and it was supposed that he had entered the water for some trivial purpose and that there his heart had failed him. Others surmised that feeling his moment upon him he had elected to die in the stream he loved, but I did not feel happy about either of the explanations. I cannot say why, but I just did not feel happy about them.

Among his scanty possessions was found a small sum of money. Perhaps years before he had acquired it and preserved it especially for his burial. It would have been like him to wish his body to be disposed of with the least possible notice by anybody. Nevertheless, his resting-place did receive some attention. The money he had left was insufficient to provide a gravestone, but many remembered his work for them and somebody raised a subscription to provide a stone. Nobody, however, charged himself with deciding the inscription, and it was left to a local mason to design, as well as to execute, the memorial. He fancied himself as a Michael Angelo and welcomed the opportunity to employ his art, but his carvings, to his great annoyance, had a very mixed reception. Some, for instance, declared it immoral to commemorate Scrambler also in a holy precinct, but my father was broad-minded in such matters, and subscribers who had little money to spare liked to see value for what they gave. So they and the mason won the day.

When I returned for subsequent holidays, I missed my old companion badly, but the lure of the stream was still strong in me and I set my heart on getting some of the bigger carp from Sallows Mill. I think I had some inner urge to prove to Tobias, somewhere in the Beyond, that the skill of the master lived on in his pupil. But I failed—failed miserably. In spite of many attempts during the next few years, neither I nor anyone else ever caught a single fish in Sallows Mill, though just as many were seen there as before. It was a mystery.

WHEN still a comparatively young man, I went to Canada and made my life there, and nearly twenty years had passed before I returned to this country, in the summer of '39. On account of the war, it was not until two years later that I managed to visit my old home. When, however, I succeeded in doing so, a walk beside the stream was naturally included in my programme. I was strolling along the bank towards Sallows Mill when ahead of me I heard an explosion and saw soldiers running hither and thither. I had already learnt that a party had been practising demolitions on old tree-stumps close by, so putting two and two together I hurried forward with all the

speed I could manage. It was as I had expected—they had amused themselves by letting off a charge in the mill-pond. You know how distressing the country behaviour of town-bred young people can be, and as I arrived the men were starting to gather their spoils. I had not lived in Canadian lumber-camps for nothing, and they were certainly surprised at the slanging they received from a middle-aged little man. How I mustered so much breath after the haste I had made surprised me also!

Fortunately the charge had been a comparatively small one, and of the thirty or so fish which floated on the surface the majority were only stunned. We watched them recover one by one and swim away to deep water. After a while we collected those that were clearly dead, and the men agreed, for they were good fellows at heart, that they should take half and that I should distribute the others to old people in the village. I watched the soldiers depart cheerfully with their share, after giving me a sandbag in which to put mine. Counted among these was a handsome specimen of some four pounds which still lay floating by the water's edge. I had insisted that it should be left there, to give it a final chance to come to, as I thought I had seen it move. After a few minutes, however, I decided that my hopes were in vain and pulled the fish unceremoniously from the water. As I picked it up it gave a quiver. I looked down to examine it, turning it over as I did so. Its left eye was missing and below the empty socket was a heavy three-cornered scar. . . .

With trembling hands, I returned him quickly but tenderly to the water. He lay there motionless, and as I stood with beating heart time stood still. . . . At last, to my great joy, he started to recover. He righted himself and began slowly to swim. Still just below the surface, he cruised around for a few minutes, gaining strength as he did so. Then, with a vigorous turn and a sudden plunge, he disappeared to the depths.

For a long time I remained standing by the waters of Sallows Mill, hoping to see him once again, and yet fearing that I might do so. Strange, indeed, was the missing eye and that three-cornered scar.

I have never seen the carp again, but one thing I do know, to this day no angler has succeeded in taking a fish from Sallows Mill, a fact which only adds to my perplexity.

The First Days of Scottish Printing

WINIFRED GRAHAM WILSON

PRINTING was introduced late into Scotland, but that is not to be wondered at, for, as James IV. put it, printing could 'nocht be perfurnist without rycht greit cost, labour and expense,' and Scotland was poor enough. Nor could it be 'perfurnist' without competent workmen, and where were those workmen to be found?

Certainly not in Scotland, and but few of them in England. In fact, England's experience had plainly shown how difficult was the printing of books by movable type. William Caxton, originally a wool-stapler, had given up business in England to take up a post in the Duchess of Burgundy's household. While there, he translated a romance from the French, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*. So great was its popularity among other Englishmen at the Court that he could not write out sufficient copies of it to supply the big demand. Caxton thereupon decided to learn to print, visiting first the newly-established press at Cologne, and later going to Bruges to work with a master-printer. There he printed the Troye stories, as well as another translation from the French: *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*. Then he returned home, and by 1477 he had set up the first press in England, at the sign of the Red Pale, in Westminster.

Caxton did not begin this work of printing alone. With him he brought from the Continent several foreign workmen. Of these, only the names of two are known to us, Richard Pynson the Norman, and Wynkyn de Worde the Alsatian. Englishmen, Caxton discovered, found printing a difficult craft to master, and so it came to be that after Caxton's death in 1491 first Pynson, and later Wynkyn de Worde, carried on the business.

Apart from Caxton and his successors, there were but few other printers in England

when the 15th century ended. There were two others in London, but one was from Mechlin; there were three more at Oxford, but one was from Cologne; while at St Albans was the famous, though unidentified, printer-schoolmaster who began work there about 1480, and who printed the *Boke of St Albans* the year that Caxton died.

Three years later saw the foundation of a university at Aberdeen. This was Scotland's third university, and its founding was mainly due to the untiring efforts of William Elphinstone, who had been Bishop of Aberdeen since 1483. Elphinstone began his academic studies at the University of Glasgow, which had been founded in 1451. There he took his Master's degree, after which he went to France for further study. This was that period when Scotland was to a great extent the pupil of France in learning, art, and polity. That remarkable and valuable

*Weill keipit ancient alliance
Maid betwix Scotland and the realme of
France*

was in full force. Not only did young men go to France for purposes of academic study, they went perhaps to take up arms, or even to learn a trade. We have reason to believe that sometimes, though rarely, it is true, that trade was printing.

IN 1493 Guiot Marchand printed in Paris *Le Compost et Kalendrier des Bergiers*. So popular was this book that by 1500 no less than eight editions appeared—six in Paris, two at Geneva. Further, a so-called 'englysh' translation was made in 1503, not, however, at Marchand's, but at Anthoine Verard's press. Richard Pynson considered this book to be printed 'into corrupte

THE FIRST DAYS OF SCOTTISH PRINTING

englysshe and not by no englysshe man.' In fact, it can only be concluded that it was translated by a Lowland Scot. Take, for instance, the title, *The Kalendar of the Shyppars*, and then go on to the beginning of the book: 'Oon shyppart kepat hys sheyp in the feyldys, qwyche was not clerk, et had no understanding of wrytys bot oonly be hys naturel wyt. . . . ' Then read the close: 'Heyr endyth the Kalendar of shyppars translatyt of franch in englysh to the lovyng of almyhty god & of hys glorious mother mary and of the holy court of hyvyn prentyt in parys the XXIII day of iuyng (=June) oon thousand CCCC & iii.' At once the Scotticisms are obvious, and show the conclusion to be true that here was the work of a Scotsman.

It is interesting to remember that only one perfect copy of this 1503 translation exists. It is in the Duke of Devonshire's library at Chatsworth, Derbyshire. But there were, centuries ago, many more copies than that, and it is possible that Spenser from one of these drew the title *The Shepheardes Calender*, which he gave to his cycle of eclogues. What interests us much more here, however, is the identity of that Scottish printer-translator who worked in Paris at Anthoine Verard's press.

No one knows his name. No one knows whether or not he returned to Scotland. But something of interest we do know. A young Scot called Andro Myllar studied the printer's art in France in the last decade or so of the 15th century. On returning to Edinburgh, he set up as a bookseller, supplying James IV. with printed books for several years, some of which he got from England, while others came from the Continent. It was only natural that Myllar should be interested in the introduction of printing into Scotland. And this interest was augmented when he got into touch with Walter Chepman, Keeper of the King's Signet, a wealthy and influential Edinburgh merchant, a man very desirous of starting printing himself. It was probably as much to make money as to serve his king and country that Chepman wished to embark on printing; but this he could not do alone, for he did not know how to print.

JAMES IV. was also anxious that Scotland should print her own books—'bukis of lawis, actis of parliament, croniclis,' religious

books, and 'al utheris bukis that be sene necessare.' So also was Bishop Elphinstone of Aberdeen, and that principally for a very special reason. He, and others like-minded with him, had spent many years in collecting annals and traditions of the Scottish saints. Now, at that time it was incumbent on all Scottish churches to follow that form of service known as the Salisbury or Sarum use. The service-books were, of course, originally in manuscript, but towards the close of the 15th century they were generally printed, either in France or in England.

These service-books had no characteristically Scottish flavour about them, and this did not appeal to Elphinstone as at all satisfactory. Hence it became customary to add to the calendar the names of Scottish saints 'in write'—a tiresome process and at best a makeshift one. What was required as, at Elphinstone's instigation, James IV. in a Royal Patent made clear, was to have service-books 'after our awin Scottis use, and with legendes of Scottish Sanctis,' and eventually to make it certain 'that na maner of sic bukis of Salisbury Us be brocht to be sauld within our Realme in tym cumming.'

So on 15th September 1507 the King issued a Royal Patent at Edinburgh, naming Walter Chepman and Andro Myllar as the persons who were to 'furnis and bring hame ane prent with al stuf belangand tharto and expert men to use the samyne for emprenting books within our realme.' Whereupon Chepman and Myllar set sail for France, and brought back the parts of the single printing-press specified, with all the stuff belonging thereto; and, what would probably be more difficult still, they prevailed upon various expert men to come with them to Edinburgh and use the imported equipment for printing the books that Scotland so badly needed.

It was not until 1508 that everything was ready, and the press was set up in the Sougait (now known as the Cowgate), at the foot of Blackfriars Wynd. Several books were printed that first year, one of which was Chaucer's *The Maying of Disport*. Another was *The Knightly Tale of Gobagros and Gawane*. We know from a letter written at Glasgow by Professor Patrick Wilson in March of 1789 that there was just before that time found in a little Glasgow shop 'some of Chaucer's works in black letter, printed by

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

Millar and Chapman at the South-Gate of Edin. 1508.'

PRINTING, however, still presented many problems. There were difficulties connected with the designing of the letters, for which a skilled artificer would be needed. The stops, too, were awkward; for a long time only colons and commas were used, and these last were long strokes as tall as the letters. The setting up of the type, with all its need for correct spacing, not only between letters and words, but also between successive lines, was almost impossible to master in those very early days. Nevertheless, the work went on.

Yet Edinburgh was still without a university of her own, a fact which greatly troubled her citizens. By a bequest left in 1558 by Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney, funds were allotted for the foundation of Edinburgh's university. But it was not until 1563 that land was purchased for the site, and not until 1583 that the university was formally opened by James VI. Then arose a new demand for the printing of books to meet the growing needs of the students coming to the city.

The Reformation had had a marked effect on the activities of the nation as a whole, speeding up learning in some quarters, holding it back in others. As far as the printers were concerned, a further new demand for books began to be created—for Bibles, psalms and hymns to meet the requirements of the Reformed religion.

In this connection a certain 'stranger,' Thomas Vautrollier by name, a printer of great skill, gave a helping hand to the Edinburgh printers in the eighties of the 16th century. Hailing originally from France, he had gone to London as a youth very early in Elizabeth's reign and there shown himself to be of such skill and enterprise, as well as a scholar of such judgment and taste, that he was in 1577 granted a ten years' monopoly for printing a number of books in foreign languages, including the works of Ovid, Tully, and Plutarch.

Unfortunately, however, Vautrollier over-

stepped his mark. In 1584 he printed the writings of Giordano Bruno, a monk who had renounced his vows, whose works, far ahead of the generally accepted ideas of his day, had been interdicted, not only in Rome, but in England too. Vautrollier had to flee the country, and he chose his refuge at Edinburgh. It was said of him that 'he first taught that nation (*i.e.* the Scots) the way of good printing.' Whether this is so or not, he was printing books for the King before 1584 came to a close.

For a 'stranger' it was undoubtedly remarkable that he could deal with material like James's *Essays of a prentis in the art of poesie* and *The King's intention regarding the last Acts of Parliament*. Perhaps James took a quick fancy to him, as was oftentimes his way. But in any case the books were printed by him, complete with his own device and motto *Anchora Spel*. Other books, too, came under Vautrollier's hands while he was in Edinburgh, the most important being the printing of those same psalms and hymns which were incorporated into the new services in the Reformed religion. Then arrived his opportunity to return home, and back he went to London. He had not much longer time there, however, for he died in the early spring of 1587-88.

One point is worth noting to end with. While Vautrollier was busy on the Edinburgh printing-presses, one of his apprentices, Richard Field, carried on his work in London. Now, Field was born at Stratford-on-Avon, and we know that Field's father and Shakespeare's father were friends. We know, too, that the friendship was continued between the sons. As years went by, and Shakespeare's first book was written, he took it in 1593 to Richard Field to be printed. It was a slim volume, true, but one it was an honour for Field to print. It was the poem *Venus and Adonis*, about whose dedication so much controversy has raged. By that time Field had married his master's daughter Jaquinetta, and succeeded to his master's business—that same master whose time with the Edinburgh printers was so profitable to all concerned.

The Merino and its Wool

LAURENCE WILD

OF all the raw materials grown or produced within the British Empire, and sent to this country to be manufactured into goods that are helping us to win the export battle, few are more important than the fine merino wool grown in Australia and South Africa. Recently Australian merino has been fetching prices which have sent the value of the Dominion's 1948-49 wool clip, of which over 80 per cent is merino, up to an all-time record of £194,589,150 in Australian money. This particular wool is the softest, whitest, and finest sheep's wool in the world. It is the wool used by our world-famous woollen manufacturers to weave the fine worsteds, and woollen suitings, and high-class knitted goods, that at the present moment rank among the most important dollar-earners in the export programme.

Behind the huge sum of money that represents the value of the Australian wool clip lies the romantic and fascinating story of the British Empire's famous merino sheep, owners of an ancestry that goes back to the days of ancient Spain. The sheep originated in Northern Africa, and were brought into Spain by the invading Moors, who bred the sheep not only for their fine white wool, but also for travelling long distances—a capacity destined to stand them in good stead many centuries later when they were introduced into the vast plains of Australia.

During medieval times huge flocks of merino sheep, numbering several millions, roamed the great sheep ranches of Castile, and brought fame and riches to the Mesta, a powerful national association of Spanish sheep-owners, who made sheep-farming the paramount pastoral industry of their country. The fine Spanish wool found a ready market in all the clothmaking centres of medieval Europe, and, even though the wool export trade of England far outstripped that of Spain

as regards quantity, it could not beat the Spanish wool for fine quality.

The extreme fineness of medieval merino was also something of a drawback, inasmuch as it had a certain weakness of fibre that made the wool difficult to spin and weave without the addition of coarser wools. In fact, tradition had it that, in 1464, Edward IV. made the king of Castile a present of English Cotswold rams and ewes that were turned to account in improving the fibre strength of Spanish merino.

FOR a long time the Spaniards jealously guarded their precious flocks of merino sheep. Strict laws prevented the sale of the sheep to other countries, and it was not till late in the 18th century that they made their appearance in England—thanks, curiously enough, to the outstanding excellence of our English horses.

In those days the horse was essential for all sorts of transport, sport, and farm work, and 18th-century English country gentlemen were devoted to the keeping and breeding of all types of horses. They raised the standard of English-bred horses to such perfection that it was said that all the world came here for their horses. There seems to be little doubt that it was this reputation that helped us to obtain the first merino sheep to be seen in England. In 1786 George III. presented some beautiful cream-coloured horses to the wife of the Spanish ambassador, in return, we are told, for a gift of merino rams and ewes from the royal flocks of Spain.

These were not the first merino sheep to leave Spain, for about the middle of the 18th century a similar gift had been made to the Elector of Saxony in Germany. The descendants of these sheep were, at one time, considered to be the finest merinos in the world,

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

and they played an important part in establishing the merino breed in South Africa. The actual introduction of the merino into South Africa was, however, the result of yet another gift of two rams and four ewes from Spain to the Dutch Government, who sent them to the Commandant of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape, where they were used to establish a merino stud at the beginning of the last decade of the 18th century. It was sheep purchased from this particular stud in 1795, and sent to Australia, that helped to lay the foundations of that Dominion's great pastoral sheep industry.

The story of how Captain John McArthur, a soldier serving in Australia, started the sheep industry going after buying, among other sheep, three rams and five ewes of the South African stud, and how he confounded the ominous predictions of incredulous English experts, is one of the epics of the early 19th-century wool trade.

THOSE were anxious days for British woollen manufacturers. In 1802, a year when three-quarters of the total of 8,000,000 lb. of wool imported into Britain came from Spain, the British Government imposed a tax on all wool imports, to help pay for the war against Napoleon. And then, to make matters worse, Napoleon carried his war into Spain itself and seriously jeopardised that country's wool export trade. Yes, there's no doubt that it was a pretty grim look-out as regards future supplies of fine Spanish merino. Then, in 1804, McArthur arrived in London with the first samples of the merino wool he had grown in Australia.

Word went round Yorkshire's West Riding that merino wool had been grown in the new colony in the far-away South. The wool experts had to admit that it was good wool. Some said that it was even better than Spanish merino. When McArthur spoke of establishing an Australian sheep industry that would be able to supply Britain with all the merino wool she wanted, how the arm-chair 'know-alls' laughed. They called McArthur the 'Woolgatherer,' and said that it was absurd

to think of breeding wool sheep in such a bare, desolate country as Australia.

But McArthur knew better, and added to his reputation as a woolgatherer by taking back to Australia more merino rams and ewes from King George III.'s prize merino stud kept at Kew. It was the progeny of these sheep, and those bought from South Africa, that followed the adventurous early settlers who found their way across the Blue Mountains and discovered the ideal merino country in the vast plains and rolling downs of New South Wales. It is recorded that the first consignment of colonial wool to be auctioned in London was sent from New South Wales by McArthur. It amounted to 329 bales, which were auctioned at Garraway's Coffee House in the City on the 17th of August 1821.

TO-DAY, out of an Australian sheep population of 102,000,000, more than 80 per cent are merinos, producing the enormous quantity of 1,000,000,000 lb. of fine wool annually. In South Africa, at the present time, the merino flocks number 20,000,000 sheep, giving an annual wool harvest of 210,000,000 lb. Here, as in Australia, recent prices have sent the value of South Africa's 1948-49 wool clip up to the all-time record of £30,761,592. A further annual yield of 7,000,000 lb. of merino wool comes from the 811,000 merino sheep in New Zealand.

To build up the huge merino flocks in the British Empire, and to improve wool quality, sheep-breeders have paid from one thousand to five thousand guineas apiece for stud merino rams. Such sheep are capable of growing 30-40 lb. fleeces made up of wool fibres that are finer than spider's web. In fact the diameter of these wool fibres varies between 1/400" and 1/4000". Some idea of this extreme fineness may be obtained when one tries to realise that if the fibres that make up one ounce of extra superfine merino were placed end to end they would extend one hundred miles. Yet, in spite of their almost unbelievable fineness, these wool fibres are as strong as gold-wire of a similar diameter.

Arturo el Magnifico

HERBERT L. PEACOCK

PEDRO faced the firing-squad unflinchingly. He was young, but he did not regret leaving life. He always knew that it might come to this.

The squad turned now and faced the line of prisoners. Pedro was in the middle. There were seven of them to-day. It had been ten yesterday—he had counted the clanging of the cell doors at the usual hour. On his left was Arturo, a few paces away. On his right was José. It was a truly great thing to die with them. It made death as he had always wanted it whenever it came—noble, worthwhile—no death at all, really.

The sun was shining fiercely. There was a vicious glint on the barrels of the rifles.

Arturo! What a man that was! Strong as a bull and crafty as a fox, the great leader, the finest guerrilla fighter in the land! Even now Pedro could see that grand statue they would put up in the main square of Santador—in the future when the cause had won, as it assuredly would. A statue of the bronzed, gigantic Arturo bursting the chains of slavery—and around him the raised hands of a worshipping peasantry. A hero of the people! Pedro had often read of such heroes, and with such heroes he had chosen to live and die. To move into death with a man like Arturo! They called him Arturo el Magnifico—even his enemies called him that! Whatever happened, history would own him as one of her greatest sons.

The squad had sprung to attention now. Their rifles were pressed back to their trouser-seams. The priest standing in the shady corner of the yard was muttering the prayer.

ALL at once Pedro was aware of something strange, alarming. It was a queer half-staccato sound on his left. He dared not even

think of it at first. Then the dreadful truth came to him—something not to be denied—not to be pushed aside by thoughts of bronze statues. Arturo was sobbing. His head was drooping. His body sagging.

Pedro looked hard ahead at the top of the spiked wall of the prison-yard behind the execution-squad. He couldn't understand—didn't want to understand this! He wanted their rifles to go up to their shoulders—quick! It was too much to face for one moment more—the madness of disillusion would come over him in this, the most heroic of all moments!

And then the light seemed to burst in upon him. Of course, Arturo was weeping for the cause, weeping for the friends he was leaving in the cordilleras, weeping in recollection of the happy days of action and danger that were no more—weeping at the feeble, inactive nature of his own death. Yes, Pedro believed he understood his feelings.

'Mercy! Mercy! I will tell all—tell everything—only, mercy!'

Yes, it was Arturo's voice! He, Pedro, had resisted the torture, had fought successfully against their attempts to make him betray others, and now Arturo—the great Arturo—no, he would not believe it! It was a fantasy—the result of his tortures—they had driven him mad—he was seeing things the enemy had implanted in his mind.

Suddenly Pedro cried out mockingly: 'Why so slow, soldiers, camaradas, why so slow? Are you afraid the bullets will bounce off us into your bodies, eh? Hurry up, now, or the revolution will be here before you've finished us!'

There was something wonderful in saying that. It was inspiring to see the flush of savage anger on the face of El Capitán as he stood ready to give the word. It felt good

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

to get in the last word. What he had said would last long, long after the crash of their rifles. It was magnificent to give words to posterity . . . and yet what was this idea of posterity if men like Arturo . . . where was faith to be found . . . It was a ghastly death to die, this was, after all.

'Patience, son, patience.'

It was José. His words were low, guttural, as though the little peasant knew exactly what Pedro was thinking. Pedro felt steadier for a moment. At least José was firm. But they would never put up a statue to him in Santador. He was a follower, whereas Arturo . . .

ARTURO'S cries had now risen to pleading anguish.

Pedro felt sick as a dog. The world was tumbling about him. The whole sun-scorched atmosphere of the execution-yard was wrapped in some kind of blackness worse than death. It was the very heat of hell pouring upon him. And José was muttering about patience—the patience of utter defeat and disillusion.

Then Pedro felt upon himself the weight of some great responsibility. It was vague, tortured, but it made him turn his head towards the whining Arturo. In one flash of bitter contempt he took in the sight of Arturo's slobbering mouth, his eyes wild with unheroic despair, his great shoulders sagging now in the abjectness of the cowardly purpose of betraying his followers.

'Dog! Judas!' Pedro spat out the words, and then fixed his eyes forward again. He had heard some movement from the firing-squad and expected to see the barrels of their rifles towards him.

But something was happening. The priest had come forward and was talking with

El Capitán and other officials. They were looking towards Arturo.

They were going to take Arturo out of the line! Pedro was certain of that. Soon Arturo would be on his knees slobbering his base confessions and betrayals. Through Pedro's mind there flashed the faces of those others who would soon be standing here, too.

Pedro determined to spring on Arturo. It was a good thing they hadn't tied them to posts and had allowed them to go unbandaged. His hands were bound behind him with raw-hide, but he would use his feet—anything to stop him—one kick on Arturo's head would do it—he had killed a man like that before—he knew all the tricks Arturo's men had taught him.

Even as he sprang, the hand-grenades came lobbing into the yard among the firing-party, and the prison-wall blew in with a crash like thunder.

Arturo and the others had thrown themselves down even before the grenades hit the ground. Pedro's body fell across him, and Arturo found himself muttering before the rescuers reached him: 'They took us out of the cells earlier—I had to delay them—and the trick worked—sorry, son, that I could not get the message to you—the cells are tight, you know, and have thick walls . . .'

And then he saw that Pedro was dead.

IN Santador to-day there is a vast bronze statue in the main square. The heroic figure is bursting the bonds of slavery and other figures of a liberated peasantry stretch out their arms towards it.

It is the statue of Pedro.

It was erected by order of the President of the Republic, Arturo el Magnifico. . . .

The Dream and the Business

*I thought to build a lovely ship,
And send it out to sea—
A thing of clear-cut shapeliness,
Of grace and dignity.
And when it came home gliding
Upon the evening tide,
I hoped that all the world would be
A witness to my pride.*

*Instead, I build my little boats,
And send them out to sea—
Each lowly hull, a floating log,
Each sail, a gull might be.
And when they come home laden
With modest treasure store,
I'm quite content to welcome them
Alone upon the shore.*

E. M. DANIEL.

Tragedy in the Nest

D. ST LEGER-GORDON

TO a sympathetic field naturalist nothing in wild-animal study can be more distressing than the wastage of young life, particularly among birds, where it is always most apparent. Discounting human agency, directly or indirectly responsible for much avoidable tragedy, the difficulties and dangers with which the smaller birds contend when attempting to rear their broods are only realised by anyone who watches their struggles year after year, and notes the perennial tale of hardly-won success or more frequent failure.

In a recent article in another of our monthlies I told the story of two grey-wagtails who for some years have nested above an old water-trough in one of my gardens. The narrative was left unfinished, since, at the time of writing, the birds were about to embark upon another venture, which, unfortunately, has proved unsuccessful. Safe from human molestation, and protected as far as seemed possible against prowling cats, the nest, containing callow young, was raided for the second time in its history by some unidentified enemy, evidence pointing to an acrobatic rat as the criminal. Three out of five attempts made in the same place have ended disastrously, and, speaking generally, for nests of all species upon my own premises the proportion of success and failure has been much the same over the past quarter of a century.

TRAGEDY may occur in many forms.

Flood destroyed one brood of the grey-wagtails. Storm-wind has wrecked several nests built in the higher branches of fruit-trees or yews. Finches have been the usual sufferers in these cases, although the nest of a song-thrush, complete with eggs, was the latest example. Insecure building is another common cause of catastrophe. I have known

the nests of both spotted-flycatcher and chaffinch capsize with their broods for lack of adequate support. Above all, there are the rapacious animals, feathered and furred, from which no nest is safe. A country-house garden, with a setting of old buildings, woodland and stream, is the foraging ground for many creatures. Here we see barn-owls and tawny-owls, carrion-crows, rooks, jays, magpies, jackdaws, and sparrowhawks, stoats, rats, and weasels, not to mention cats, conventionally after vermin, yet actually more interested in fledgling birds and all accessible nests—and few garden nests indeed are beyond the reach of a cat.

As for owls, although they certainly prey upon small birds at times, as is proved by the contents of their pellets, I have found no justification for regarding them as habitual nest-robbers. Among my own outbuildings, barn-owls may be seen flying in and out of lofts where swallows breed apparently unmolested, and only a few days ago indisputable evidence exonerated tawnies which were suspected of demolishing a hedge-sparrow's clutch. This despoiled nest was built about five feet above ground in some shrubby growth around the base of a big yew-tree in which two owls had held long discourse during the night of the raid. They were naturally denounced as the culprits, until four blue egg-shells, drained of their contents, were discovered under the bush, the technique once again indicating the work of a 'villain rat.' It is not, perhaps, generally realised that the brown rat can climb like a squirrel. I have noticed him more than once among the topmost twigs of a cherry-tree, and he is capable of collecting any growing pea-pod upon which he sets his fancy, stick supports or green stalks merely serving as convenient ladders.

Apart from furred marauders, the magpie

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

has always been the arch-enemy of my own garden birds. The sparrowhawk may snatch an occasional fledgling, but the magpie, watching from big trees on the fringes, notes the comings and goings of parents feeding young, and turns the information to grim account as opportunity presents. We have suspected him of destroying pied-wagtails, chaffinches, and song-thrushes, and have seen him attacking the brood of a missel-thrush. The robber, incidentally, got nothing but hard blows from the latter adventure, for the nest of a missel-thrush is not raided with impunity, even by the carrion-crow. This warrior king of the thrush family is a protection to the garden generally, as he challenges every intruder of questionable character, although even he cannot always save his belongings from marauding rooks or jackdaws, which are sometimes too many for him.

ALONG the hedgerows, in the thickets and woods, one reads the same story. During a typical walk in early May I found—first, the remains of a fledgling robin whose eyes had been cleanly removed by some sharp-beaked assailant; then, the ravaged nests of song-thrush and hedge-sparrow; and lastly, the decapitated body of a young buzzard, still in the downy stage, lying under the forsaken and obviously plundered eyrie. It seems endless, but the secret of wild-life survival lies, of course, in the prodigality of supply. Young life, it must be remembered, not only serves to restore its own species, but provides sustenance for others. In accordance with the natural order, therefore, every carnivorous animal with its own young to feed turns nest-hunter, and the supply is only met by exceeding the demand.

Wild bird-life, indeed, is controlled at the nest, as part of the natural economy. Even the larger birds are not exempt from the toll levied, since they prey upon the broods of one another. This is evidenced by the ferocity with which each species defends its own breeding-place. One sees frequent strife between ravens and crows; between crows and ravens and hawks of any kind; between magpies and kestrels; and there are many other common instances. Even so, they cannot always avert calamity. I have known a jay's nest cleaned out by a magpie; the eggs of both sparrowhawk and tawny-owl

purloined by a carrion-crow; and few nests are safe from daring four-footed climbers too often disregarded.

One of the most informative discoveries I ever made was a stoat's larder, an inspection of which the owner allowed most unwillingly. It contained an incredible assortment of egg-shells, including those of kestrel, jackdaw, and wood-pigeon, and since, despite endless persecution, stoats remain tolerably plentiful, the toll levied upon nestlings and eggs by these indefatigable hunters must be huge. In his *Beasts of the Field*, W. J. Long's story of 'Kagax the Weasel' (the same animal) and his bloody activities was exaggerated very little.

The broods of little birds, such as wood- and willow-warblers, which build so low, suffer less than might be expected, being admirably protected by their surroundings. They are also so numerous, and spread over so wide an area, that a reasonable number stand a good chance of escaping. From personal observation, I reckon that one of the most vulnerable nests is that of the long-tailed-tit, two out of every three that I have watched coming to grief upon an average. Skilfully camouflaged as they are, they remain conspicuous, and, being placed for choice in gorse-bushes, have too many enemies at their doors. A gorse-brake is everybody's shelter, and therefore everybody's hunting ground, from rapacious birds and semi-wild farm cats in search of young rabbits to the ever-insatiable weasel and deadly viper, often overlooked as a menace to the minor forms of wild life.

The nest is assaulted from either above or below—from above, usually by crow or magpie; from below, by more insidious enemies, whose work cannot always be identified. In the opinion of one old countryman whom I know, mice are frequent offenders. Many quit farm buildings for the fields in spring, and being quite omnivorous are more than likely to take eggs, or even nestlings. In the case of longtailed-tits, however, the weasel is a more probable assassin, with the viper—abundant in gorse-brakes—not above suspicion.

I WAS surprised to learn that an eminent naturalist recently described the viper as a nocturnal hunter. This is in direct conflict with my own observations. In the aftermath

of sunset, when nocturnal animals become most active, I have yet to hear the viper's sinister rustle—that familiar sound as he slips away over the dry leaves at noonday. I have neither seen nor heard him astir at dawn, nor noted his trail on the dew, although foxes and even badgers are still abroad.

My own impression of the viper is that he retires into night-quarters as the earth grows cool and moist after sundown, and, even if considered nocturnal, he certainly hunts by day. I have seen a viper killing a young thrush at two o'clock in the afternoon, but think that vipers feed earlier as a rule, having come across several in a gorged condition during the morning. Upon another occasion, I found one so visibly inflated about midday that he was quite unable to glide away according to his wont. My wife and I sat on a bank beside him and ate our own lunch, until after about an hour, having sufficiently digested his meal, the snake was at last able to withdraw. Another was found by a neighbour lately in a like state of repletion. This time, the reptile was curled up in a robin's nest, beneath which lay the dead parent bird, while two or three nestlings inside the snake's stomach accounted for its glutton state. The probable truth is that the wild viper feeds well but seldom, for which reason very little is known about its hunting methods. That it is a destroyer of young birds is certain, however, and it seems rather curious that the viper enjoys such a 'good press' among naturalists when other creatures are black-listed with less justification.

I have not dwelt upon the destruction for which humanity is directly responsible, that being obvious. And there remains that element of accident inseparable from the occupation of the earth by man and his minions. There is the dog that thrusts a merely inquiring, but none the less devastating, nose into the nest of the wayside robin; the horse that plants a crushing hoof upon the skylark's brood; the cow which lies upon the curlew's clutch—all occurrences personally observed—and the agricultural machine or implement which destroys unwittingly, like the poet's 'inadvertent step.'

Yet, I would like to close upon a brighter note, for one also sees examples of miraculous escape. There was a rock-pipit's nest which, hidden only by a tuft of sea-pink, remained unscathed upon a little rocky headland with forty herring-gulls assembled around it. A few weeks ago, again, I witnessed the good fortune of a robin whose nest happened to be built close beside the entrance to a popular racecourse. She sat quietly upon her eggs while thousands of people passed within a few yards without noticing or molesting her.

One must remember, too, that, at the worst, tragedy in the wild lacks the significance or poignancy that it attains in human life. The distress of wild parents who lose their broods is short-lived, a matter of hours, or a day at most, and there is no grief in retrospect. Their memories are also short, their emotions transitory and mainly physical. Indeed, Nature's very callousness has indubitable compensations.

The Song of the Fair Folk

*We are joy, we are song, we are fleet in the dancing,
The shy and the wild hold us close to their breasts,
They are gentle and humble who hear our small singing,
The artless and white-souled we choose for our guests.*

*We lure from spinning-wheel, fireside, and lover,
We call him from fields and the lonely plough's claim,
The wide-eyed and watchful we haunt from the hillside,
And take from its exile the child with no name.*

*The old ones they hear us, they catch our faint laughter,
The blind and the crippled have known our sweet throngs,
We put the soft dreams in the eyes of the children,
They never forget, who have heard our wild songs.*

MARY E. LOFTUS.

Old Turkish Times

R. O. HARVEY

I ARRIVED in what was then the Turkish town of Basra, Mesopotamia (now Iraq), in 1903 to take up duties as a junior member of the staff of a British commercial firm. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast between life in Mesopotamia in those days and life at home. Conditions in Mesopotamia had at that time changed little since Biblical days, and almost the only up-to-date appliances in use were the telegraph and river-steamers running to Bagdad. The Turks frowned on all modern inventions, as they preferred to keep the people ignorant and in a primitive state.

Such things as telephones and typewriters were forbidden, as were also ordinary rubber-stamps for office use. A dozen or so of the latter were forwarded to us from home. They had to pass through the Customs, and the officers cut off the rubber with the firm's name, and sent us the handles. Thermos flasks suffered a similar fate. They were broken up with a hammer and the pieces consigned to us, the Customs explaining their action by saying they thought the things might be bombs!

Cost of living was extremely cheap, and wages were correspondingly low. An Arab servant's pay was about £1 a month. I kept two horses and a syce for 35s. a month. Whisky cost from 24s. 6d. to 28s. 6d. a case.

Law and order was given scant attention, and crime of all sorts was rampant, chiefly murder and robbery.

My firm's house contained offices and living quarters in one, and in the summer months, when the heat was intense, we all slept on the flat roof. During the night eight armed Baluchi watchmen guarded the house and godowns, and in order to keep each other awake they shouted all the time. Added to this noise was the endless barking of pariah dogs, howls of wandering packs of jackals, and croaking of countless frogs—so, until one

got used to it, sleep was almost impossible.

Occasionally we were wakened up by the noise of rifle- and gun-fire, with bullets whistling over our heads. This was caused by bands of robbers attacking some native's house, and as long as they did not molest us we did not interfere. We went, however, to bed with firearms handy in case the marauders should decide to pay us a visit, although this was unlikely. When the shooting got really severe, the Turks sometimes called out a platoon of soldiers, who were careful to sound their bugles well before reaching the seat of trouble, thus giving the robbers time to escape—and the soldiers suffered no casualties.

At one time these night raids became so frequent and serious that the government had at last to take firm action, so the local governor or wali was dismissed, and a new man arrived from Istanbul. He proved to be a man of a very different stamp, and after he had been in command for a short time not a shot was to be heard. His method of pacifying the district was simple but drastic. He ordered the military and gendarmes to round up and arrest as many robbers as possible, some of whom were known and others suspected. No warning at all was given, with the result that large numbers were secured—some reports said between fifty and sixty, while others said up to one hundred. The captives were then loaded with chains and other heavy weights, put into boats at dead of night, and dropped into the Shatt al 'Arab. They received no trial, as this would have caused too much trouble and fuss. Very likely there were some innocent men among them, but this was considered quite a minor detail. When I was told of this, I did not believe it was true, but changed my view when, shortly after, our lightermen while hauling up an anchor brought up a corpse loaded with

chains. This was the river from which we obtained our drinking water—but filtered!

Unfortunately this governor was recalled to Istanbul after a few months as, from the Turks' point of view, he was too successful, and another wali was sent in his place. The new man was of little use, and shooting and looting recommenced, but on a much reduced scale as the bulk of the old hands were at the bottom of the Shatt al 'Arab.

MOST of the ringleaders of these robber bands were negroes, whose ancestors had been brought as slaves from the east coast of Africa in Arab dhows, and many of them were still slaves, owned by wealthy Arabs. Some of these negroes were excellent fellows and true as steel, while others were real desperadoes and would stick at nothing, and it was these latter who were mainly responsible for the violent crimes I speak of. Before the gang set out on a raid, each member was given a false name to be used until the job was finished, so that if the men had cause to call to each other their real names would not be heard.

At one time I had a negro syce. He was a splendid specimen of a man, and extremely powerful. One day he rescued an Indian from drowning in a most gallant way and at considerable personal risk. A few days later he had a quarrel with another syce, whom he murdered in a brutal manner. He then disappeared, and I never heard of or saw him again.

Apart from robber bands, there were professional murderers who worked on their own account, and could be hired by unscrupulous people who wished to get rid of some person against whom they had a grudge or who happened to stand in their way. The professional's fee was usually about £5, but this varied according to the social standing of the intended victim, amount of risk entailed, etc. During 1915, when Basra was occupied by British troops, the authorities had occasion to arrest a negro for some serious crime. He made a desperate attempt to break out of gaol, and in doing so all but murdered a British warder, for which he was sentenced to death. This man was one of the professional murderers, and he admitted having on an average carried out about twelve murders a year for the last ten years.

The Turkish law-court was a place to be

avoided, as corruption was rampant. Before a case ever reached the court, several officials had to be given 'backsheesh,' while the person who offered the highest bribe to the judge invariably won. The litigant who lost the case lost also what he had paid in bribes, so, to ensure against the double loss, it was necessary to hand over a considerable sum. A native once told me that he had paid the judge £T50 for a decision in his favour, but, to his surprise, when the verdict was announced it was against him. Some time after, he met the judge and asked for an explanation. It was that the other side had paid £T100.

It could not be said that the ordinary Arab was particularly moral, except in one respect, which was the sanctity of his women-folk, and woe betide any girl who strayed from the path of virtue, as the penalty was death. One of our Arab foremen, who was an extremely decent fellow, had a daughter who had an affair which came to the knowledge of her father. I was told that he said little or nothing to her, but ordered her to mount one of his donkeys. Then, armed with a revolver, and accompanied by his brother, who carried a spade, the three of them journeyed far out into the desert. Only the two men and the donkey returned. In such cases the male offender did not get off lightly either, for, having been the cause of bringing disgrace on the girl's family, he was a marked man, and only his death by one of the family could wipe out the blot. Until this was accomplished, the men of the outraged family wore their 'arguls,' or camelhair bands which keep their headcloth in place, round their necks, instead of round their heads. After they had killed their man, the arguls were restored to their heads, and there was great rejoicing. This was an ancient Arab custom, which the Turks never interfered with.

I knew only of one instance of a Britisher being attacked by robbers, and it was not thought that they were after him, but rather that they had intended to rob his head native clerk, who occupied part of the same house. The clerk owned some houses in the village, and had collected his rents that day, which no doubt the robbers knew. The Britisher, an engineer, lived about three miles up river, quite separate from the British colony. The gang assailed his house during the night with rifles, etc., and he used his shotgun with good effect until wounded in the wrist, so that he was unable to reload his gun when the robbers

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

shot him down, possibly out of revenge, as he had wounded some of them. When our consul heard of the murder, he took the matter up so strongly with the Turks that they had to take some action, and make an example. They accordingly arrested nine men in the village, and executed them all without trial. I was told afterwards that the guilty men had all escaped into Persia, which was probably true. In those days Britishers were greatly respected by the natives and it was most unusual for any of us to be molested in any way.

The Turkish gaol was most primitive. All males were herded into one part, and women into the other. Local prisoners who had relations in the district were not supplied with food, which had to be brought to the prisoners by their relatives. Frequently the guard at the door would not allow food to enter the gaol until he had received 'bak-sheesh,' and unless this was forthcoming the prisoner went hungry.

THE Turks paid little or no attention to health services or to sanitation, although there was a hospital of sorts. Diseases of every kind were common, cholera among them. In 1905 there was a severe visitation of cholera. All the Turks did to cope with it was to force those who were afflicted into the hospital, which was the last place the wretched victims wished to go, as they knew they never would come out alive. Consequently, those who were stricken were taken off by their relations, mostly by boat to outlying districts, and so the infection was carried over the whole country, and the trouble became widespread. We Britishers did not escape, and our small community of twenty-one was reduced to fourteen in three weeks, for, out of the eight who were laid low, seven died. The one who recovered was the only victim not attended by the Eurasian doctor, which fact, combined with his having been given as much brandy as he could drink, saved his life. In those days there was little hope for those who fell seriously ill, as all the medical attention was in the hands of this one Eurasian doctor, who knew next to nothing and never treated any serious case successfully. There was no dentist or dental treatment of any sort to be had, so toothache was a nightmare. It was, nevertheless, possible to have a tooth extracted, as the captain of one of the river-

steamers, who was, however, naturally frequently absent, could pull a tooth fairly well, but of course without any anæsthetic. The captain in question was Charles Cowley, who later on in 1916 received a posthumous V.C. for his very gallant attempt to take his ship the *Julnar* to the relief of Kut.

After the cholera epidemic, the British firms decided that it was necessary to have a British doctor to attend to their employees, and they all agreed to subscribe a certain sum per annum towards his salary. It was a great relief when the doctor turned up, and fortunately he proved to be an excellent fellow in every way. Apart from attending to the British community, he attended natives as well, and built up a large practice.

There was one modern appliance to which the Turks raised no objection, and this was an ice-making plant. It was owned by a Jew, and was in the town. This was most convenient for the Turks, who often commandeered all the ice, this causing the owner eventually to close down the installation entirely. However, he ordered a much more modern plant from England, which, under the supervision of a Scots engineer who came with it, was erected several miles down river, well out of the way of the Turks.

The engineer was a fine chap and quite elderly. He had never been East before, and knew nothing about the climate or Eastern customs. He arrived during the hot weather, and brought no thin clothes with him, so he just wore pyjamas all the time, much to our amusement. One day he saw the muchtar or headman of the village beating one of his wives most unmercifully, which so angered our old friend that he sailed in with fists and gave the muchtar a good thrashing, and then locked him up at the ice-plant. The villagers reported the matter to the Turks, with the result that the engineer got into much more trouble than the muchtar, and he was sent back home, which was just as well, as he might have been mauled at the instigation of the outraged muchtar.

AS is usual where British colonies are found, we had a Club, which provided tennis, billiards, a cardroom, reading-room, etc. Most of us gathered there in the evenings, and it proved a great relaxation.

H.M. gunboats frequently visited the port, and we greatly appreciated the company of

the naval officers, who joined us in shooting expeditions, golf, tennis, football, etc. I remember a unique and most amusing incident in connection with a football match against a naval team. The football ground was on the edge of the desert, which at this place was as flat as a table, and of a hard smooth surface, stretching away for many miles. On the day of the match a strong wind was blowing out to the desert, and, while having a few practice kicks before starting to play, one of our team punted the ball high into the air, when it was caught by the wind—and away it sailed out into the blue. Two of our men went after it, but, as they failed to gain on the ball, they gave it up. We then sent out some Arab boys, who are grand runners, but they also failed to catch it. By this time the ball was a mere speck in the distance. The sailors' faces got longer and longer, as this was their only ball, and we all thought it had gone for good, but fortunately a few mounted Arabs happened to arrive

just at that time, and, on the situation being explained to them, they willingly agreed to try to recover the ball, and away they went at full gallop, until almost lost to sight. After about an hour or so they reappeared, and when they arrived they had the ball with them, so we were able to have our match after all, but not before posting some Arab boys out in the desert, to catch the ball should it escape again.

In those far-off days there were no hotels in Basra, and the few Europeans who visited it usually had letters of introduction to one or other of the British firms, who willingly offered them hospitality. Amongst those who came to stay with us in 1904 was a Mr Reynolds, a geologist, who was about to set out on an expedition to prospect for oil in South Persia on behalf of the D'Arcy Exploration Company, the forerunner of the great Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Little did I think then that his efforts would result in such wonderful success.

Hyde Park Oracle

ROBERT FURNIVAL

POETS traditionally despair of giving expression to the deep chaos of impressions and world-shattering ideas which clamour in their hearts for the liberating spell of speech. 'Had I a hundred tongues,' they wail, 'a voice of brass . . .'; and, having mourned, they sink back into the lifelong convalescence of a creative iron-lung, wringing words grudgingly from themselves. Here, at Hyde Park Corner, their prayer is answered. More than a hundred tongues—a Tower of Babel. The fields of religion, art, politics, personality, sex, history, ethics and philosophy undergo a continual process of breaking up into clods, to be trodden back into sterility by

a swarm of sightseers. The whole scene—listeners, talkers, static and dynamic, trampled grass and dusty, churned gravel, sky as impassive as the eye of a watching policeman, litter scattered over the broad expanse of the Park—is suffused in a haze of words, voiced and unvoiced sounds which rise above the heads of their speakers and blend inextricably with the noises of their neighbours. Words hang in the air; they are the aroma, the river-effluvium, the marsh-mist rising until it seems impossible for any bird to fly in such an atmosphere, so dense is it. Yet fly they do. Look up and you will see three drab brown sparrows groping their

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

way from one tree to the next through the thick evening, cheerfully lurching as a sudden gust catches them; or passively held in the still air, three dry and withered leaves of autumn, strayed into the wrong season. And as a burst of laughter breaks upwards towards them they breast the cloud of noise and gain their objective, disappearing into the sparse leaves of early spring.

It is impossible, or at least uncomfortable, to wander from platform to platform, an indolent and indiscriminating bee, a connoisseur off duty, tasting here the thin bitter wine of fanatic religiosity; here rolling the thick, cloying nectar of popular philosophy round the tongue; here sipping gingerly the fuming, astringent emetic of a twisted Communism; sniffing at the tawny port of a cranky college don, with a whole hive of bees in his bonnet; or gulping down greedily gouts of British ale, humour which foams and froths but is nevertheless a trifle flat and shamefaced since the war. It is possible—to agreeable—to remain wedged in the audience of a single man, in whom all voices combine, all ideas converge and live together happily, who speaks a language which is unmistakable and understandable—that of Camden Town. Edge still closer and see him as he stands, slight, good-humoured, Will Hay's pince-nez for ever tumbling off his thin nose, red-cheeked but not florid, somewhat ascetic, humble, encyclopaedic, leaning on his modest placard which proclaims him ingenuously the 'Hyde Park Brains Trust.'

TO gain admittance into a certain order of mandarins, candidates are locked alone in a room for three days and told to write down the sum-total of their knowledge. It must be a maddening and futile examination, embodying the great torture of despair. It is inartistic. For the artist is distinguished as much by his ability to select significant detail from the vast, amorphous mass of material which life presents to him as by his technical fluency. Yet here is this man, an artist in his own way, exposing himself deliberately to the mandarin-test, and worse, to its viva voce sequel. The sheer audacity and self-assurance of his claim to knowledge explain some of his appeal in an age in which few people can be sure of themselves. His spaciousness, and his comprehensive view of life give him the stamp of greatness.

As the questions—stupid, profound, facetious—fly up at him he catches them and turns them aside deftly, as a boxer allows a flurry of punches to ride on his forearm.

'Can the R.S.P.C.A. fine a man for boxing kippers?' some anonymous inquirer asks. 'Madam,' he replies, twitching his pince-nez from the bridge of his nose between a delicate thumb and forefinger, 'ere I offer you the finest mind in 'yde Park, surround myself with the hintellectual hayleet for your benefit'—his arm scythes the air in a flat sweep to indicate our gaping faces—'and you go and ask a question like that.' His contempt withers the questioner into silence. He looks at us acidly with the polite disdain of the pedagogue for a froward schoolgirl. 'Anything else?' he asks.

'Yus,' a thin voice flutes. 'Ow do they git the trains dahn the Toob?'

The crowd bates its breath, tensely awaiting their idol's disapproval of such banality.

'A very sensible question, friend,' approves the finest mind in the Park. 'How do they git the trains dahn the Toob?'

He sets his busy brain to unravel this new problem. And so it goes on. Eight hours of endless questioning, ingenious answering, never-ending good humour.

'How does the atom bomb work?' 'Nuclear fission . . . not a hexpert on biochemistry meself . . . radioactive particles . . .'

'Can a man living in a front room who gets behind with his landlord be made to pay back rent?' ' . . . leading legal horthorities say . . . law of tort and contract . . . to put it simply . . . yus.'

'Ow do they git the bubbles in spirit-levels?' 'Eastern 'abits . . . smoke glass hookahs . . . wait till a hair-bubble catches in the toob, saw it off, seal up ends, there's your spirit-level.'

'How can a black cow eat green grass and give white milk?' ' . . . well, analogy tells us . . . mixed up in the halimentary canal.'

'Where does your lap go to when you stand up?' 'Think in terms of habstract . . . lap ain't finite . . . potentiality comes into play circumscribed by conditions of time and space . . . the Essence of Lapness. . . '

'How does a bald man know when to stop washing his face?' 'Wears a bowler-'at, washes up to the rim. 'Seasy.'

Easiness, the ease with which this Camden Town Colossus bestrides the whole world is the keynote of his performance. Nothing

perturbs his calm, nothing dulls the thirsty glitter in his eye as he calls for more and more questions, like Gargantua thundering for the vital wine. And as the words flow out and out, as he pulls them from his hidden reserve as a conjuror produces yards of multicoloured ribbons and flags from his mouth, it is inevitable to wonder what great history lies behind this present moment, what years of adventure, study, research, travel, and observation—for in all his eight hours he rarely lets fall a hint about his private life. He is such a man as Chaucer was. It is not difficult, and faintly diverting, to imagine Chaucer standing with approval on the fringe of the audience and noting down the Brains Trust's endless anecdotes on his mediæval cuff. Perhaps his secret is Chaucer's secret—a great sympathy with all classes of men; an unbounded tolerance for their childish wants and questionings. He has, too, Chaucer's all-seeing eye. He is athirst for knowledge—'I want you to tell me things, too,' he asserts, gazing earnestly at his disciples. He is self-effacing, for, as we have remarked, in all the volume of his talk there is little said explicitly about himself—'I'm the most 'umblest man in the Park,' he declares in the grand, grammar-reckless Shakespearean manner.

AS one turns to go, the man remains indelibly in the mind as an institution. He is timeless, one whose words would evoke sympathy in all ages—and yet not universal. It is unthinkable that he should ever move from Hyde Park Corner; he is a truly British institution, as British as the Park itself. Where else is there to be found such freedom of speech? What other nation would send its police to guard frenzied orators frantically denouncing that nation, condemning the police themselves? For in passing you will notice on the next stand a Negro, systemat-

ically tearing down the popular fallacy that all coloured people are, *ipso facto*, cretinous, substituting the more likely suggestion that it is their detractors who are unbalanced.

'I went to the Colonial Office,' the Negro announces with an air of calm triumph, 'to obtain coupons for winter clothing.' He pauses dramatically. 'A lady sitting there, with a huge map of the world before her, said that extra coupons were only granted to men and women from the Tropics. "Madam," I replied, "I come from British Guiana." "I'm sorry," she said, "British Guiana is not tropical." "Madam," I said, "British Guiana is exactly situated on the Equator. It is one hundred per cent. tropical." But she wouldn't believe me. It took me six letters and a book of geography to prove my case. And they talk of the ignorant savage!'

A moment later his theme has broadened into universal brotherhood. He stands crucified against the darkening sky, his arms spread out, embracing all continents, all oceans, sun, moon, and stars, all colours and creeds, men, women, children, and the dogs who scavenge in the gutters. The evening, as if being sketched in by a pencil, darkens; its colour thickens and solidifies into the first hour of night-time.

'Peace!' declaims the Guianan, turning his broad brown face to heaven, 'Universal tolerance!'

Answering his prayer comes the wry voice of his neighbour, the Brains Trust, admonishing his circle of followers. He is a man who has found universal sympathy. I have never seen him come or go. For me, he stands there always, never ceasing to speak, a man beyond time or space, bereft of all normal desires. He never eats, sleeps, sits down to rest. Over him the darkness gathers. Caught in the background branches of the trees hangs his homespun veil of words, words, words. . . .

Towards the Light

(Xenophanes, 6th century B.C.)

*The gods gave not all knowledge to men's minds
In the beginning many ages past;
But man is ever seeking till he finds
And reaches knowledge perfected at last.*

DENIS TURNER.

Scoring Aboon the Breath

Defeating the Evil Eye

THOMAS DAVIDSON

*Against the blink of evil eye
She knows each antidote to ply.*

*Train, Strains of the
Mountain Muse (1814).*

JAMES NAPIER, in his book on folklore (1879), recounts an interesting experience he had when he was a child. He fell ill, and nothing the doctors could prescribe appeared to do him any good. The old skeely-wife of the village therefore was called in, as it was suspected he had got a blink of the uncanny een. She set to work on the patient and her *modus operandi* was as follows. A sixpenny-piece was borrowed from a neighbour, a good fire was kept burning in the grate, the door was locked, and the patient placed upon a chair in front of the fire. With the sixpenny-piece she lifted as much salt as it would carry, and placed both in a tablespoonful of water. The water was then stirred with the forefinger until the salt was dissolved. Next, the soles of the sufferer's feet and the palms of his hands were bathed thrice with the solution, and after these bathings he was made to taste the solution three times. The operator now drew her wet *forefinger across his brow*. The remaining contents of the spoon she cast right over the fire into the back of the grate, saying as she did so: 'Guid preserve frae a' skaith.' These were the first words permitted to be spoken during the ceremony. Thereafter, the patient was put to bed.

Such was the cure. What about the cause of the ailment? This, we are told, was due to a suspected blink from an uncanny ee, or, as it might have been expressed in certain parts of the Borders, the subject had been 'overlooked.' Now, the belief in the existence of the evil eye, or, as it was called in the south of Scotland, the ill or uncanny ee, was

without doubt on the topmost rung of the ladder of diablerie. It was confidently held that this power was granted in most cases by the devil to the more favoured of his followers, although it had to be admitted—but very grudgingly—that to some people it came as an unfortunate natural endowment. In this latter case it was very often a curse to the unhappy possessor. For example, we hear of a man in Nithsdale, who, possessing een of unsensy glance, and having no wish to avail himself of its potential power, found life very difficult. His eyes blasted the first-born of his yearly flocks and spoiled his dairy. He went so far, indeed, to prevent trouble, that he never looked a man or woman full in the face. Such instances, however, appear to be the exception rather than the rule.

Generally, too, we find that this particular field of the diablerie was left open to the old women, who, if tradition tells true, made the most judicious use of their precious gift, and when they found how much their uncanny een were dreaded made the most of the situation. Does not Galloway's folksong inform us:

*Kimmer gets maut, and Kimmer gets meal,
And cantlie lives Kimmer, right couthie and
hale;*

*Kimmer gets bread, and Kimmer gets cheese,
And Kimmer's uncannie e'en keep her at ease.*

From the same quarter, Cromek being our informant, we learn that, before markets were so fully attended, the lowland wives would go at the sheep-shearing times into the uplands, taking pieces of cloth, sugar, and tea for barter in the wool traffic. The *pawky auld dame* trusted to her far-known character, going always empty-handed—yet she returned with the heaviest and fairest

SCORING ABOON THE BREATH

fleeces. The Bute Session Records gravely relate that Marget McKirdy, who was accused of charming, confessed that she used the following charm for 'ane evill ey':

*I will put an enchantment on the eye,
From the bosom of Peter and Paul,
The one best enchantment under the sun,
That will come from heaven to earth.*

THE ill ee was dreaded by the peasantry because a mere glance was sufficient to cause grievous harm to mankind and all kinds of property; it deprived cows of their milk, and milk of its nutritive qualities, so that it could not be churned into wholesome butter. The people who had the most to fear from the witch with the uncanny glance were the farmers and dairymaids. They had, as we can well imagine, as many antidotes—equally superstitious of course—to apply in defence against the witch's evil glance. Train catalogues some of the dairymaid's remedies as follows:

*Lest witches should obtain the power
Of Hawkie's milk in evil hour,
She winds a red thread round her horn,
And milks thro' rowan-tree night and morn,
Against the blink of evil eye
She knows each antidote to ply.*

The use of rowan-tree was noted by King James I. in his *magnum opus* on witchcraft. There he says: 'Such kind of charmes, as commie dafte wives use for healing forspoken goodes, for preserving them from evill eyes, by knitting roun-trees or sundriest kind of herbes to the haire and tailles of the goodes'; and as late as the 18th century this practice was carried out in the Borders. A certain Mr Mabon in the town of Selkirk faithfully adhered to this old superstition by always ensuring that a new cow, before entering his byre, had one of her ears pierced and decorated with a rowan-tree pin and red thread or ribbon.

When the Border farmer's wife found the cows had been 'overlooked' and their milk bewitched, she applied this remedy. On the return of the milkmaids from the loaning with their milkpails upon their heads, and when the foremost took down her vessel in order to pass under the doorway, the farmer's wife dropped a horseshoe heated red-hot into the milk. It was necessary that the ceremony should be performed at the instant when the

milkmaid was lowering the pail, and it was further required that no one should be aware of her intentions.

A slightly different technique was adopted in an instance which occurred in Auchtergaven, Perthshire. A farmer, having bought a cow whose milk at first upon churning seemed to refuse to yield butter, called in the old women of the neighbourhood who were reputed to be skilled in such matters. The women met together in solemn conclave and unanimously decided that it was a sign of something, and that Hawkie had got the *blink o' an ill ee*. By order of the conclave a bottle full of the milk was thrown over the former owner's house. The churn was taken out of the door empty, and brought in at the window full—still with no effect. At last, the cow was walked away a hundred yards, brought back, and tied to a new stake in the byre, after which her milk yielded abundance of butter, the owner and others concerned remaining quite satisfied of the virtue of the charm.

GOING back to the opening tale, we noticed there that the skeely-wife drew her wet forefinger across the patient's brow. Now, this action is but a variation of what was probably considered the most efficacious remedy that could be applied against the evil eye. The Border name was 'scoring aboon the breath,' and consisted of drawing a blunt instrument across the forehead to the effusion of blood. To be really effective, it was necessary to make two scores forming a cross. In cases where the scoring was to be carried out on the 'victim,' it was sufficient, as in the example cited, merely to draw the forefinger across the forehead. When the witch was scored, however, more drastic methods were resorted to, and generally a small pin or rusty nail was used. Nails from a horse's shoe were particularly efficacious. In this connection, we find the following record. In April 1747 Helen Irvine, spouse to George Grierson of the Parish of Bowden, appeared in the Kirk of Selkirk and complained to the Presbytery there assembled that 'Robert Speedin came to her house a month ago about seven in the morning, and reviled her by calling her a base blade and saying "what have we to do with you?" to which she only answerit, "Robert! I never did you harm," after which he gripped her in a violent manner by the side of her head, and as she appre-

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

hended, scored her above the eyes to the effusion of blood, with some instrument which he had in his hand; then went off to the smiddy where the blacksmith was at work and said to him and his son that now he had succeeded in scoring Nell Irvine's brow.'

In 1704 Archibald Lawson of Stow quarrelled with Marion Wilson. When he went home, he found his child took 'a greeting,' which continued for some days and nights. Convinced that Marion was the cause, he went to her and bled her with his nails, and forthwith the crying stopped. Marion had the reputation of being a witch, and it would seem she had been held down and bled with an awl on a previous occasion.

Finally, an instance of scoring above the breath is recorded about a farmer in Wigtownshire as late as 1825. He had some cattle which died, and there was an old woman living about a mile from the farm who was considered no very canny. She was heard to remark that there would be 'mair o' them wad gang the same way.' So one day soon after, as the old woman was passing the farmyard, one of the farmer's sons took hold of her and got her head under his arm, and cut her across the forehead. We are not told, however, whether this antidote or remedy was effective or not.

THIS belief in fascination by the eyes is as old as time itself. Virgil alludes to it, and says: *Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos*. The Rev. Robert Kirk in his *The Secret Commonwealth* (1691) speaks with conviction about the destruction of animals whereon the eye glances first in the morning, and goes on to cite the case of a man in his parish 'who killed his own cow after commending its fatness, and shot a hare with his eyes.' Joseph Glanvill, also, was a firm believer, and in his *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1681) writes: 'I am apt to think there may be a power of real fascination in the witch's eyes and imagination, by which, for the most part, she acts upon tender bodies. For the pestilential spirits, being darted by a spiteful and vigorous imagination from the eye, and meeting with those that are weak and passive in the bodies which they enter, will not fail to inflict them with a noxious quality.'

That the superstition was so widespread and generally accepted in Scotland becomes

very apparent when we find the eminent legal authority Sir George Mackenzie including it in his *Laws and Customs of Scotland* (1674, etc.). There he says: 'Witches may kill by their looks, which looks being full of venomous spirits, may infect the person whom they look. I know there are who think all kinds of fascination by the eyes, either an effect of fancy in the person affected, or else think it is a mere illusion of the Devil, who persuades witches that he can bestow upon them the power of killing by looks, or else the Devil really kills, and ascribes it falsely to their looks; whereas others contend that by the received opinion of all historians men have been found to be injured by the looks of witches: and why may not witches poison this way as well as the Basilisk doth?' He goes on to state that 'though witches confess that they did kill by their looks, their confession and belief may, if they be otherwise of a sound judgment, make a very considerable part of a crime when it is joined with other probabilities, yet *per se* it is hardly relevant.'

Why the malignant powers of the evil eye should have been so universally believed in and accepted may seem remarkable to us now, but in that dark reign of superstition and ignorance, where casualties, misfortunes, and griefs, due mostly to violation of natural laws, were put down to the dreaded powers of evil spirits, demons, and witches, it is not strange that special significance should have been given to the human eye. It is the only physical organ which can truly express the innermost workings of the mind, whether they be pity and compassion, or envy and hate. At one instant it flashes fiery, full of scorn and rage; at another, its glances, envenomed with hate, can sear the very soul; and last of all it can melt in compassion and love, pity and sorrow. And according to the fragment, *Wag-at-the-Wa*, we are told:

*Whenever the e'en holes wi' low shall he fou'
Then is the time come, that ye may dread
the pow—
For Hell's e'en are firelike, and fearfu'
to view;
Their colour they change oft frae dark red
and blue;
They pierce like an elf-prick, ilk ane that
they see,
Then beware of their shimmer, if ye're seen
ye will die,*

WAR CEMETERIES IN ITALY

*Your heart pulse will riot, your flesh will
grow cauld;
And now happy's the wight, that draws
breath till he's auld.*

As for the ridiculous remedies applied, we can only say that where all rational conception of the causes of disease and of medicine

is completely absent, and where every illness is superstitiously attributed to demoniac sources, it is not surprising that the use of magical or supernatural ceremonies as a panacea for these ills led to an eager credulity in their efficacy, no matter how absurd and anomalous in themselves. For, after all, if the witch could kill, she could also cure.

War Cemeteries in Italy

B. S. TOWNROE

ALL visitors to Italy should certainly see the new British war cemeteries. These are English gardens in an Italian setting, skilfully designed by Mr Louis de Soissons, the Chief Architect for Italy and Greece of the Imperial War Graves Commission, and all planted with green lawns, trees, flowering shrubs, and roses by the aid of Italian labour working under British head-gardeners. A number of these are Scotsmen, and often spend their leave in some Scottish village, bringing with them their Italian wives and dark-skinned children. The gardeners, and the other members of the staff of the Imperial War Graves Commission—some administrators, some engineers, some horticulturists, some architects and clerks of works—are ambassadors of Great Britain in a country which has its own problems of widespread unemployment and of progressive overpopulation.

There are more than forty British cemeteries of the Second World War, ranging from the Agira Canadian cemetery close to the ancient Sicilian city of Agrigento to that of Villanova, a village hard by the main road from Ravenna to Ferrara in the Romagna plain. There are, however, many variations in these cemeteries. At Rome the military cemetery has been laid out in the shadow of the Aurelian Wall, just west of the Rome Protestant Cemetery,

where are the graves of Keats and Shelley. The Cassino cemetery is about a mile away from the battered and bombed little town, to the south of the hill upon which the Abbey Monte Cassino is now being rebuilt.

The main features of these new cemeteries are those to be found in the cemeteries of the First World War. The first impression of the visitor is that of order and symmetry. So many churchyards and burial-grounds in Scotland and England bear the traces of the passing of time, for the old headstones often lean in all directions, or have been collected and placed against a wall so that the space they occupied may be used for new burials. The prime object of the Imperial War Graves Commission, which has to care for the graves of officers and men, now nearly one million, scattered throughout all parts of the world, is to provide, as far as is humanly possible, for the permanency of each individual grave.

WHEN I visited in the summer of 1949 the War cemetery of Minturno, to the south of the road to Naples, I was struck by the care taken by a Scottish engineer to make sure that every one of the two thousand and more headstones, which were being erected to replace the temporary wooden crosses, would remain upright for centuries

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

to come, and would not be disturbed by any human force. A trench had been dug at the back of each row of graves, and in this had been constructed a continuous concrete beam. On the upper side of the beam there were sockets, into which the headstones had been fitted, and then secured with cement. No doubt it will take some length of time before all the headstones in all the war cemeteries throughout the world have been put in their places, but once fixed they will be held as in a vice, permanent and immovable.

The headstones deserve particular attention. At first the pilgrim is impressed by their simplicity, and by the fact that there is the same headstone for all, whether it be man or woman, and regardless of rank, colour, and creed. They are all of the same shape—2 feet 8 inches high above the ground, 1 foot 3 inches broad, and 3 inches thick. The top forms the segment of a circle 2 feet 6 inches in radius. The size, proportions, and upper curve were the result of careful investigations made over a quarter of a century ago by a special committee of artists and architects, who spent considerable time in deliberation, and consulted expert opinion, in order to ensure that their final design was the best possible from both the æsthetic and the practical points of view. An example of their wisdom is seen in the way the curve at the top of the stone has helped not only to throw off rain and snow in a manner least likely to wear out the inscription below, but also to preserve the life of the stone.

The inscription carved on the stone includes the badge which the dead soldier wore in his cap. Even if the grave be of some high-ranking officer who did not wear his regimental badge at the time of his death, nevertheless the badge is inscribed on his headstone. The equality of sacrifice of all is symbolised by the similarity of these headstones. Under the badge comes the name, age, military rank, and other distinguishing details. For a Christian there is a Cross, and for a soldier of the Jewish persuasion the six-pointed Star of David, with the appropriate religious emblems for the fallen of other faiths. Below this is a text or other personal tribute chosen by the next-of-kin. On the stones over the graves of unknown soldiers are the words: 'Known unto God.'

Much time since the end of the Second World War has been spent in consulting with the next-of-kin with regard to the religious

emblem and the personal inscription. Great care has also been taken in checking the initials and the spelling of all names. In Italy, these headstones are made of stone from local quarries carved by local craftsmen. In France may be found headstones carved in Chinese characters by men of the Chinese Labour Corps for the graves of their comrades.

IN a number of the Italian cemeteries, including Minturno, Foiano, Caserta, Catania, Syracuse, Agira, the Anzio Beach-head, Orvieto, Santeramo, and Gradara, the work of putting the great Cross of Sacrifice into position was either in progress or was completed during the summer of 1949. This Cross, with the bronze sword in front, as designed by the late Sir Reginald Blomfield, looks particularly beautiful against the dark background of Italian trees or hills. The size differs according to the area of the cemetery, varying from fourteen to twenty-four feet high. On the ground is a large octagonal block of stone, which may weigh about two tons. There are then three steps leading to the Cross itself. The base of the shaft is let into the pedestal block by a six-inch stone joggle and a bronze dowel. The length of the arms together is one-third of the height of the Cross measured from the base of the shaft. The shaft is one piece of stone from the foundation to under the arms, and tapers from the base to the top.

There have been many interpretations of the symbolism of the design. Certainly it stands out in the changing lights, so that some regard the sword of bronze as itself the Cross and the stonework merely a frame. Another interpretation is that the sword symbolises the offering up in sacrifice of those who perished by the sword. Whatever may have been Sir Reginald's own view, undoubtedly it was much better to have the same design for every cemetery rather than hundreds of different designs. The relatives and friends of those who died in Italy may well be grateful that the Imperial War Graves Commission decided to make no change in the memorial which for over twenty-five years has made such an appeal to the public imagination. Unquestionably, many parents have found in the Cross of Sacrifice comfort and something inexpressible which responded to their deepest feelings.

The War Stone has been placed in the larger

WAR CEMETERIES IN ITALY

cemeteries—at Minturno, Syracuse, Anzio; and in others it will be erected in course of time. This is also known as the Stone of Remembrance, and was designed by the late Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect of Government House, New Delhi, with the aim that it should be a monolith as permanent as any work of man can be. Sir Edwin described the monument in these words: 'A great fair stone of fine proportion, 12 feet in length, lying raised upon three steps, of which the first and third are twice the width of the second. All its horizontal surfaces and planes are spherical and parts are parallel spheres.' This massive and ponderous block of stone is costly to cut at the quarry, and difficult to transport, but when in place it is most impressive. Each monolith bears the inscription, engraven in large letters: 'Their name liveth for evermore.'

APART from the architectural treatment, the horticultural development of these cemeteries in Italy has not been easy. First, the heavy growth, which during the fighting from 1943 onwards had taken place in the war cemeteries of the First World War, had to be pruned and thinned. Another year was spent bringing back the turf to pre-war standards. At the same time, a good supply of flowering-shrubs was planted out in all the cemeteries of the 1939-45 war. Nurseries were established at convenient centres so that an adequate stock of plants might be available for bedding out in continuous borders. This work was performed in accordance with advice given by Sir Geoffrey Evans, Economic Botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. After a personal visit to Italy he made a report which is serving as a most useful guide to gardening operations in Italy, and in other areas where climatic conditions of the same kind exist.

In cemeteries that lie under the hills, provision has to be made against the torrents of water which sweep down during the winter and the spring, while in the hot summer months incessant watering in the early morning and in the evening is essential to keep the lawns green and the plants alive. In connection with the water-supply at a number of cemeteries Sir Geoffrey Evans suggested considerable improvements, which have involved about twenty-five major engineering schemes. Nevertheless, in some

places special drought-resisting grass has to be used.

All this necessitates long hours of work for the British gardeners and the Italians under their charge. One Scots gardener, who in the old days had been employed on a private estate not far from Edinburgh, described to me his three-mile cycle-ride in the summer from his cottage to the cemetery at 6 a.m. After watering he went back to his home for breakfast, which usually consisted of bacon and eggs, for he had his own pig and fowls. He returned to the cemetery for a morning's work, followed by a break of about two hours at midday, when the sun in Italy is most intense. Often he continued watering in the evening until it was dark. Certainly the results of his labours gave great joy to the relatives of the men who lay in that secluded spot. The visitors on this occasion had been transported in an airlift, admirably organised in 1949 by the British Legion.

THE surroundings of these cemeteries are most picturesque. The Ancona cemetery lies two miles south of the little town, which was founded in antiquity by Greek refugees from Syracuse, and which still contains the columns attributed to a temple of Venus, and a well-preserved marble triumphal arch, erected in the year 115 in honour of Trajan. The two Anzio cemeteries are near the sea, situated amid the remains of country houses built by the Emperors Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, and not far from the modern seaside resort so popular with the Romans of to-day. The military cemetery at Assisi is two miles south of the beautiful city, filled with memories of St Francis, who was born there in 1182, and is within a few hundred yards of the famous pilgrimage church of St Mary of the Angels with its Oratory of St Francis. The Bologna cemetery is on the main road between Forlì and Bologna, which contains one of the oldest universities in Europe, and is noted for the streets, most of which are bordered by lofty arcades.

At Caserta, after visiting the cemetery, I explored the Royal Palace, one of the most imposing buildings in Italy, constructed in the 18th century by order of King Charles III. of Naples, and used in 1944 as the headquarters of General Alexander. The men who lie at Padua, which fell to British 8th Army troops

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

on 29th April 1945, include some of those who served on the General Headquarters of the Central Mediterranean Forces after its removal from Caserta. Padua, the ancient Patavia, is celebrated for its university, founded in 1221, which made the city a famous centre of learning in the Middle Ages.

At Rimini on the Adriatic, to-day a most fashionable bathing-resort, is the Gurkha cemetery. The 4th Indian Division played a gallant part in the all-out offensive in August 1944 against the German positions on the Adriatic coast, and the Gurkhas specially distinguished themselves on the Marano river near the frontier of the state of San Marino. Immediately after the capture of Rimini, Canadians and New Zealanders took up the advance, and, although their movements were paralysed for a time by extremely heavy rain, forced the withdrawal of the German crack troops. Many Canadians now lie in the Villanova cemetery. The

cemetery chiefly connected with the South African Armoured Division is Castiglione dei Pepoli, a small town where the ancient castle of the Pepoli family, who for a long time held a brilliant feudal court there, is now the town-hall.

A pilgrimage to the Italian cemeteries brings home to the visitor the debt we owe to the officers and men of the forces raised in all parts of the Empire. Each government of the Commonwealth is now represented on the Imperial War Graves Commission. In the words of Admiral Sir Martin Dunbar-Nasmith, V.C., the Vice-Chairman of the Commission, the care for the graves of those who made a common sacrifice, and whose sepulchre is the whole earth, tends 'to keep alive the ideals, for the maintenance and defence of which they laid down their lives, and to strengthen the bonds of union between all classes and races of the British Commonwealth.'

Ambition

J. L. HEPWORTH

EVERY afternoon, as soon as school was ended, Jimmy Cogg would go running to the place where it was possible to see over the wall round the gasworks. The teacher would close his book or else walk to his desk from the blackboard. The class knew the lesson was finished, school was finished. With them, Jimmy Cogg would rush out into the yard, out into the street where the soot-blackened houses clustered as though for comfort against the misery of their surroundings. And then Jimmy Cogg was alone, hurrying, running along a side-street, along an alley, on to the place where a derelict smithy clung to the strength of the gasworks wall.

It was easy to climb to the half-collapsed roof of the smithy. It was dirty, but what was dirt when trousers were always tattered, when shirts were always patched or held together by safety-pins, when boots were always tied with string. On the rotting roof-beams, Jimmy Cogg moved with expert agility. No broken slates slid under his feet, no wood-work broke to join the rubble that lay on the floor. And, as he moved to the gasworks wall, the noise he had heard faintly before was suddenly clamouring at his ears—the rattle of rivet-guns, the whine and screech of drills and reamers, the throbbing roar of an air-compressor.

Every afternoon, as soon as school was

ended, Jimmy Cogg would look over the gasworks wall and watch the men building steelwork. Then he would wave, and the men would wave back, some from the ground where the concrete foundations were like giants' teeth, some from high up in the structure.

They knew him, those men did, and Jimmy Cogg was proud of that. To begin with, they hadn't seen him there, watching them. When he waved, they didn't notice. But, after a time, they noticed him, first one and then another. And if they saw him, they returned his salute. Then, there was a day when one of the men walked over to him, looking up, speaking, asking if he would bring some fruit-pies from the shop. That was a wonderful day, because it was the first time any of the men had spoken to him, and it was the first time they had asked him to help by bringing something for them. Afterwards, they came often. He got cigarettes for them. He took messages to their lodgings. He was always ready to help. He was their friend.

When he wasn't helping the men, he watched them working. There was Sam, the erector. There was Charlie, the riveter. There was Johnnie, another erector; George, another riveter. There were others, riveters, erectors, labourers. Jimmy Cogg knew them all, and knew the kind of work they did.

ONE day Jimmy Cogg brought some cigarettes for Johnnie. Johnnie was small, lean-faced, and with deep lines round his eyes from smiling. The boy sometimes thought how good Johnnie would look wearing cowboy clothes, smiling as he walked into the saloon, his hands on his guns. But as he handed down the cigarettes he wasn't thinking of Johnnie as a cowboy.

Johnnie said: 'Thanks, kid. Now, here's a threepenny-piece for yourself.' He tossed the coin up, and Jimmy caught it gratefully.

Before Johnnie moved away, the boy asked: 'After you left school, Johnnie, how did yer get a job, working on steel, like this?'

The man grinned. 'Oh, I dunno, kid. Just drifted into it, I suppose.'

'Is there ever new lads started, Johnnie? Does lads from school ever 'ave chance to get in jobs like yours?'

The erector sensed the urgency in the boy's voice. He didn't walk away. He lit a

cigarette and then he said: 'There's always a chance for lads that are keen. But it's rough work heating rivets, and a lot of them pack up.'

Jimmy nodded. 'If I got started on a job like this I wouldn't never pack up. I'd heat rivets hard as I could go all day. Did you start like that, heating rivets, Johnnie?'

'Aye. That's how I started, lad.'

'Then you got on to erecting steel? When you got older, you learned 'ow to put the job together?'

The erector blew smoke through his teeth. 'Aye. That's how it was.'

Jimmy Cogg looked at the structure, and then down to the man. 'I wish I was a year older, Johnnie,' he said.

'You're wishing your life away, kid.'

'But if I was a year older I'd be leaving school, and I'd be able to see the foreman and ask if he'd give me a start. If it was all right I'd be working on the job with you.'

'You'd like that, Jimmy, eh?'

'Best of anything in the world.'

'There'll be other jobs going up, kid—even if we're away before you finish school. If you're keen you'll get started as a rivet-boy. If this is the sort of job you want you'll get into it, Jimmy lad. Any foreman'll set you on when he sees you're keen.'

The erector moved away. The boy shouted: 'Maybe I'll get with you after a few years. Maybe you'll all come back, and I'll be able to leave the job I'm on and come with you.'

'Maybe, kid. Maybe you will. If we come back we'll be looking for you.'

Jimmy Cogg watched him walk back to the structure, looking smaller than ever against the great stanchions and floor-beams. When he heard the shout, he looked up in the steel-work, trying to see who was calling. 'Jimmeee Coggeee. Jimmeee Coggeee.' The name was clear, above the noise coming from the job. The boy peered eagerly up at the steel. Then he saw a man waving, and he waved back. It was big Sam. Excitedly, Jimmy shouted: 'Sam, Saaam.' And then Sam went on again with his work, and Jimmy Cogg watched and turned over all that Johnnie had said about getting a job heating rivets. Sitting on the gasworks wall, he thought of himself being faster at getting rivets out than any other lad on the job. He thought of himself leaving the rivet-fires, to begin learning how to build steel. He thought of

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

himself being like Johnnie, the steel erector. He thought of himself being better at the work than Johnnie, better than any other man on the job. He thought of himself being foreman. Himself, alone, responsible for the job. Telling the others what to do. Jimmy Cogg, the foreman.

When darkness settled over the structure, a whistle blew and the men went away to their lodgings or to their homes. Jimmy Cogg climbed back across the roof of the ruined smithy, back to the ground, a little figure moving in the gloom of the streets; going home to eat bread and jam and drink tea from a cracked beaker; going home to eat fried fish and chips at supper-time; going home to sleep in the bed that had dirty blankets and a pillow, uncased, that was striped blue and white and was as dirty as the blankets.

THE school was old, an age that showed on the stonework and the doors and even on the stone-flagged playground. Generations of children passing through the school had furtively carved their initials on the desks for posterity to know of their existence, and had worn the stone steps with the unending tread of their clogs and shoes, so that the battered door no longer sealed the cloak-room from the weather, and on wet days the rain flooded the floor. But mostly the children were not used to comfort or modernity, and only the teachers complained.

That day, which was like all the other days in the school, Jimmy Cogg's teacher had told the class to write an essay about the work they would like to do after they left school. It was very quiet in the classroom. Faintly, distantly, came the rattle of rivet-guns,

and from somewhere in the school the clattering and jingling of milk-bottles; another class singing; somebody outside in the street whistling. In the classroom, the scratching of pen-nibs was louder than the outside noises.

Jimmy Cogg struggled to write his essay, staring sometimes out of the windows, sometimes at the teacher, sometimes at the boy in front of him. The others wrote laboriously, but they stared about less than Jimmy Cogg. When the papers were collected, Jimmy had written only a few lines. He had made the letters as big as possible to conceal the shortness of his essay.

The teacher walked round collecting the papers. Jimmy Cogg sat at the front and his paper was the last to be collected. The teacher laid it on top of the others he held. Because it was such a short essay, and because the writing was so big, the teacher glanced through it, first disinterestedly, then again with more interest. Finally, as he reached his desk, he looked yet again at the work, and then at Jimmy Cogg.

'When I leave school, I will bild steel. When I leave school I will bild high and good with steel. High and good with steel.'

The teacher sat at his desk in the quiet classroom, and the essay was a challenge and a faith. He put it aside and glanced at some of the others. They were longer, but the words Jimmy Cogg had written were still in his mind, and the other essays seemed drab somehow. He put the papers into his desk and began the next lesson, and now he was aware of the distant noise of rivet-guns. And when he looked at Jimmy Cogg the words of the essay formed again in his mind, and his eyes were no longer a mixture of pity and contempt.

Oh, to Know!

*In 'Over the hills and far away'
Long time ago, what magic lay!
Love, life, the very light of day
Lay over the hills and far away.*

*How blue those fair horizons shone—
Fairest of aught I looked upon;
Serene those slopes the light lay on—
But now, but now their spell is gone!*

*For you I never more shall see
Across those heights to welcome me;
Though I should go, you would not be
Beyond their smiling mystery.*

*Yet when shall end my little day—
Past loneliness and agony,
Will you be waiting there for me—
Over the hills and far away?*

ANSO.

More Salads, Please

DURING the War, I was asked to write a book on the eating of vegetables raw. It was called *Eating without Heating*, and sold very widely. The difficulty of so many people, however, is what they call the lack of variety. May I therefore this month make a plea for the growing of a far greater number of salad plants.

The first thing one has to learn is to grow the saladings in a soil rich in humus. This means that adequate organic matter must be dug in when the soil is being prepared, and, in addition, horticultural peat (which has been deacidified) should be forked in at the rate of one bucketful to the square yard. Besides the peat, an organic fertiliser, such as a good fish-manure containing about 10 per cent. potash, will be used. If the soil is very sandy, wood ashes might also be applied at $\frac{1}{2}$ -lb. to the square yard. The surface will be worked down fine. It will probably entail treading or a light rolling, plus light raking. All the particles of soil should be finer than a grain of wheat in the top inch. You may have to wait a few days until the soil is in the right condition, for a seed-bed cannot be prepared when the land is sticky and wet.

Be sure to go to a good reliable seedsman and pay a fair price for first-class seed. This is very important. Grow varieties which are known to be suitable to your district and grow the kinds for the particular period of the year with which you are concerned. Buy enough seed to last the season.

It is always better to sow in evenly-spaced lines. Sow the seed at the distances at which the plants are to grow in the rows. This system, known as station sowing, results in a saving of seeds, and in better plants. If three seeds are sown at each station, the seedlings can be thinned down to one, should each one of the three germinate.

It is a good plan to do the sowings at what is called half-stations—that is to say, if the final plant is to be at 8 inches, then the sowing should be done at 4 inches apart. The first thinning is naturally to one plant per half-

station, and the second thinning is not carried out until the salading is fit to use, and when this is done it leaves the plants growing at their main stations at the right distance. The second thinnings, of course, are used in the salad-bowl. Most salads contain 80 per cent. water and some 90 per cent., and thus it is of value to be able to provide artificial rain by means of whirling sprinklers and the like.

Cabbage salads should be better known. It is the white hearts of the crisp varieties that are so useful. There are three main periods of sowing—early April for the summer, May for the winter, and July for the spring cabbage. Early Paragon Drumhead is an excellent winter variety, and for a summer kind I can recommend Greyhound. Many people dislike broad-beans eaten raw, but, if a row of Extra Early Giant Windsor is sown this month and the plants are kept free from black-fly by spraying with liquid derris, first-class pods will result, which, if they are picked early, provide beans full of flavour for the salad-bowl.

French-beans when picked young can be eaten raw, and so can peas. Carrots are delicious. A sowing of James's Scarlet Intermediate can be made now, the roots being pulled as desired, and thus no thinning being necessary. When I sow radishes I invariably put in a mixed bag—Wood's Frame, White Icicle, Sparkler 50/50, Scarlet Globe, etc., and so radishes of different shapes and colours are available for the bowl over quite a long period. The several varieties are sown in rows 6 inches apart and drills $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch deep. If a sowing is made now, another should be made in ten days' time: it is better to sow half-a-row at a time and use all the roots that develop than to sow more than are needed.

I should like to have mentioned rampion, endive, corn salad, and Hamburg parsley, but space forbids.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

Science at Your Service

BEADS—WITH SEVERAL PURPOSES

MOST people will think of beads in terms of jewellery or clothing adornments, and even in that sense probably regard them as a little old-fashioned. But minute and graded glass beads are manufactured in Britain by a well-known glass company for a variety of important technical purposes. Small particles of a special glass are processed into spheres and then size-graded. The smallest are rather less than $\frac{1}{10}$ millimetre in diameter and the largest about 1 millimetre. Beads or glass spheres in these grades are known as 'ballotini.' Larger beads from 2 to 3 millimetres up to 11 or 12 millimetres in diameter are also produced.

The very fine ballotini, approximately $\frac{1}{10}$ millimetres in diameter, find one use as a coating for the surface of cinema screens, including the small home cinema screens. They give the screens a very high reflective factor, particularly when the angle of view to the angle of projection is small.

The beads of larger dimensions have scientific uses in laboratories, for example, in certain kinds of filtering. They are of vital importance in preparing blood plasma for storage. The red corpuscles must be removed and, if the whole blood is shaken with the glass beads, coagulation of the red component is accelerated; in addition, a material which would later coagulate the plasma is also removed by its adherence to the bead surfaces.

It is highly probable that increasing use of ballotini will be made in road-signs, road surface-markings, such as white lines and crossing markings, and kerb markings. A halt or direction sign in black letters on a white background which is coated with ballotini is brilliantly reflective in a headlamp beam. Yet the reflective surface made up from the mass of minute glass beads is damage-proof. The construction of surface-markings with these small beads is already practised in the United States. So far, in Britain their use has been limited to road-signs.

AN OIL CONVECTOR-HEATER

The general conception of an oil-heater for the home is probably the small, black, portable unit, not in itself very elegant, and used by most people purely as an emergency form of heating. A new oil-heater, designed by one of the best-known manufacturers of oil-stoves, has the appearance of a modern kitchen-cabinet or refrigerator, though, since the heater will be used in livingrooms or halls, the enamel finish is not white but pearl. The cabinet is just under 29 inches high, $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep. The room-heating is based upon the convection principle, cold air being drawn in at the base and warmed air delivered upwards and forward from a grille at the top. It is described as ideally suited for steady background heating of halls, lounges, small flats, etc.

With one gallon of oil, the capacity of the oil reservoir, the burner will give 40 hours' continuous burning on a low flame, or 26 hours on full flame. A special filling-can is supplied with the heater. It is stated that the distribution of heat by convection eliminates the risk of wall discoloration, and the heater may be placed against a wall or beside furniture quite safely. It is mounted on cushioned rubber feet.

A COKE-BURNING HEAT-STORAGE COOKER

The solid-fuel heat-storage cookers are now familiar, especially in country houses and, indeed, in large town houses. Generally, these cookers have operated most effectively upon anthracite, but the scarcity of anthracite, or at any rate the tendency for its supplies to be uncertain, has led one of the principal makers expressly to design a four-oven model for fuelling with coke. It is stated to be an ideal cooking-unit for a household of seven to nine people. Besides the ovens, there are a large hot-plate and two simmering-plates. The rate of fuel-combustion is thermostatically controlled. Shaking fire-bars facilitate ash-clearing. The two upper ovens are designed for roasting and baking, the two lower for slow cooking or plate-warming.

SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

A POWER DUSTER FOR FARM AND PLANTATION

One of the most important contributions of the engineer to-day is in the design of new agricultural machines. Indeed, design is not only a task for the engineer; the scientist and the practical farmer must co-operate with him to ensure that the performance fulfils a reasonable range of field conditions. The spraying and dusting of growing crops with insecticides, fungicides, and growth-regulating hormones is an ever-increasing activity—easier to recommend than to carry out at just the right season or in just the right weather conditions. Good mechanical equipment is essential. Nevertheless, that equipment must not only spray or dust the acres speedily; it must place the materials accurately upon the foliage so that they actually do protect the crop.

Many farms, and especially plantations abroad, cannot undertake spraying economically because piped-water is not available. A good power duster, which can give 'cover' as effectively as power sprayers, has long been required. Such a machine has recently been designed as a result of joint study between the Long Ashton Research Station and a firm of engineers. A number of these machines has already been used to fight the 'sudden death' disease of clove-trees in Zanzibar and to control locusts in Rhodesia.

A dust can be distributed from rates of 1½ lb. per acre upwards; the emission stream can reach a height of 80 to 110 feet, or it can give similar range horizontally. The duster is self-motored, and mounted on a two-wheel chassis for haulage by tractor or car; the fan has a speed of 2000 r.p.m. and a capacity of 2000 cubic feet of air per minute. The actual dust-emitting section is a swivel trunk, with vertical adjustment through 60°, and various discharge-nozzles can be fitted to provide side, rearward, and other directions of delivery. It is claimed that this machine is much in advance of any dusting equipment hitherto obtainable, and its invention may challenge the view that liquid sprays are more efficient than dusts.

Considerable interest was taken in this British machine at the International Congress of Crop Protection held in London last summer. Though obviously suited for many tropical areas, it is equally applicable to British conditions in large commercial orchards, etc. The prototype model was exhaustively tested at Long Ashton.

HOUSEWIVES AND PAINT

Realising that the housewife is the ultimate judge and consumer of much paint-finished work, one of the largest companies in the British chemical industry decided to find out just what housewives do think about paint. A well-known organisation which specialises in opinion-polling collected the views of 2057 housewives in fifty-six separate districts of the British Isles. The results have now been published in a most interesting booklet and are thus available for the guidance of paint manufacturers, builders, decorators, and, indeed, of all who produce household articles which are paint-finished.

An article in this magazine in October 1949 dealt with the history of green as an unlucky colour, but it is clear from this housewives' survey that green, unlucky or not, is now one of the most popular colours for household decoration. Cream and buff (31 per cent.) were more often chosen than green (23 per cent.), but green was the outstanding choice among the distinctive, non-neutral colours and shades. However, some trace of superstitious disfavour for green was shown by the verdict on car colours. Here green—despite popularity in the home—was well down in the poll, with black, blue, grey, and maroon all securing more votes.

One interesting finding was the extent to which decorations are carried out by householders themselves or by professional contractors. Of the houses covered in the survey, 72 per cent. had been decorated by members of the family, and 45 per cent. had been decorated, partially or wholly, by professional painters. But the percentage of amateur decoration undertaken was rather lower in Scotland than in England. The most frequently decorated room in the house was shown to be the kitchen. The most frequently mentioned fault of decorations in the house was flaking or peeling of wash or distemper.

This booklet is full of factual information, scientifically analysed and interpreted without bias, and it cannot fail to be valuable to anyone whose interests lie in these fields. It represents the new approach which business is making to problems of distribution—not to rely upon guesswork in designing products, but to carry out objective research to discover what the majority of people really want. The sample method of surveying public opinion is probably far more accurate in the material field than in the political field.

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

ANTI-INSECT PACKING MATERIAL

Exporters of food products and other materials often find that their goods are damaged in transport by insects, and government research has recently been directed towards finding an insect-proof wrapping material. Paper impregnated with DDT was not successful as, even though an insect might pick up enough DDT to kill it whilst boring a hole, other insects could pass through the hole too easily and quickly to absorb a lethal dose. A hard-surfaced paper, like sandpaper, as one layer in the wrapping was tried. It prevented insects from getting through, but the paper itself was impracticable as wrapping, being difficult to bend and liable to crack. A third idea was the use of corrugated cardboard impregnated with DDT. It was hoped that insects would crawl along the 'tunnels' of the corrugated cardboard, but, in practice, they simply bored through the material and were not enticed to explore to their left or right.

Finally, cellulose wadding solved the problem. Several layers, DDT impregnated, are used. The insect, after boring through one layer, does not go straight through the series, but is tempted to wander among the folds. In this journeying it is certain to pick up enough DDT to be fatal. In a large number of laboratory tests with seven types of insect pests no insect succeeded in penetrating the cellulose-wadding wrap.

A PERSPECTIVE-DRAWING INSTRUMENT

Perspective drawing is considerably used by architects and commercial artists, and it would probably be employed more by engineering draughtsmen if detailed accuracy did not involve so much complex geometric work. A drawing instrument which can be fixed to the board has recently been invented and its producers claim that it eliminates all difficult and complicated mathematical calculations. A normal, a bird's eye, or a low-level perspective drawing can be obtained with its aid. Outrigger arms attached by brackets at each side of the drawing-board carry pivot-centres; a coiled flat steel ribbon rotates on each centre. These ribbons lie flat on the board and join at a third and common pivoting centre; a transparent straight-edge is mounted on this common pivot and this can be rotated or locked to either ribbon. It is graduated in both true inches and foreshortened inches, and is used

for the verticals of the perspective drawing. There are also a projector scale at the common pivot, and interchangeable diminishing scales for horizontal lines, these being calculated for various angles between the ribbons as measured by the protractor. Thus, vertical and horizontal lines can be drawn accurately in a drawing whose perspective is 'set' by the chosen angle of the ribbons and the positioning of the 'horizon' line. A small-size 'elliptograph' is supplied with this instrument; this is a special template and scribing-bar with pencil and pen points, and it enables perspective ellipses to be drawn.

METAL SASH-WINDOWS

The modern metal window has developed as a casement and hinge-opening window, but double-hung metal sash-windows are now being manufactured in a variety of stock sizes. This may well be a boon to owners of traditional-type property, and in any case this metallic presentation of the vertically-adjustable window is not merely a wood-into-aluminium transformation. One new feature is the absence of sash-cords or weights. The jamb-guides are made of extruded aluminium alloy and the parting-strips are of specially selected hardwood impregnated with a lubricant. The sash-balances are coiled springs, with a variable-pitch actuating-rod, which equalises tension at all degrees of opening.

The frames are supplied pre-glazed, but outer frames of pressed-steel must first be installed by the building contractor; the manufacturers of the aluminium sash-windows fix their frames into these steel sub-frames. Advantages claimed are low cost, light weight, quietness, and relatively smaller decorative upkeep.

TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.

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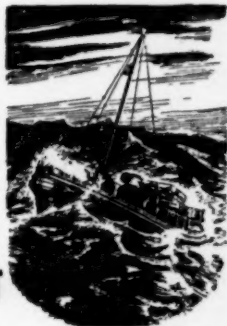
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